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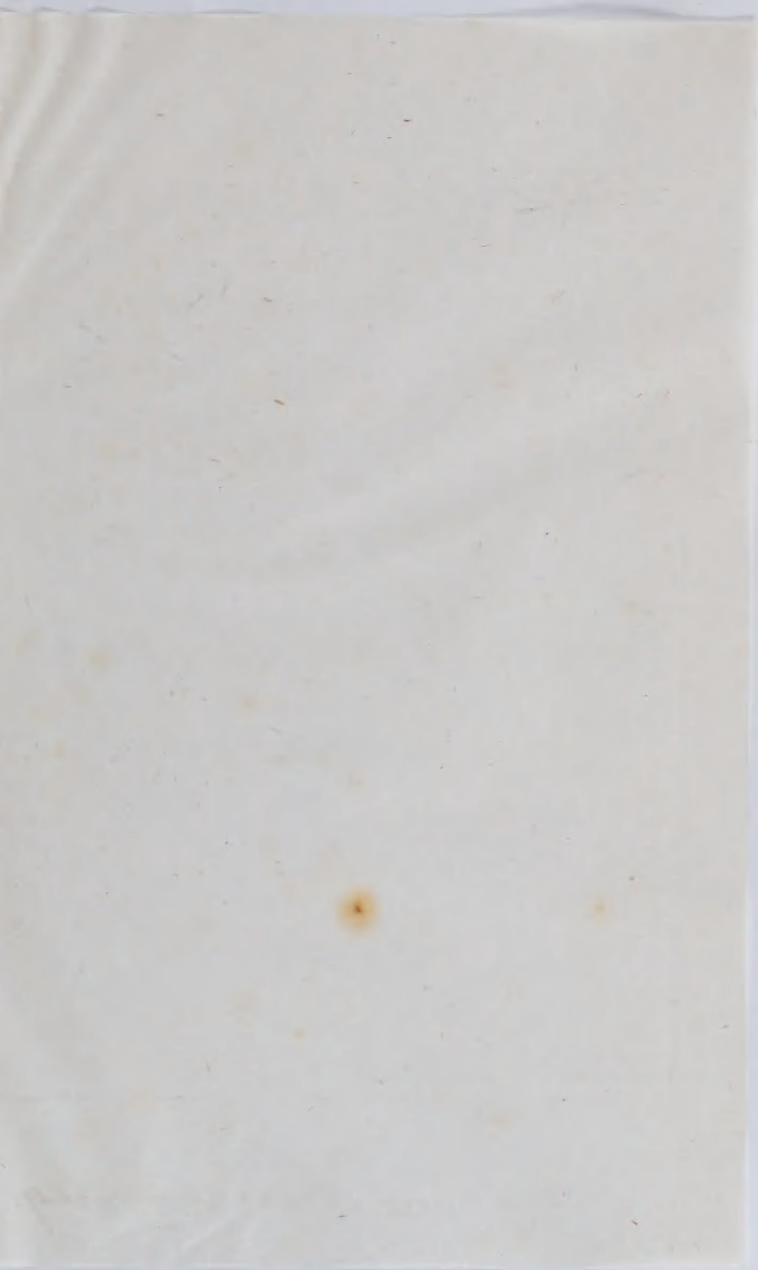
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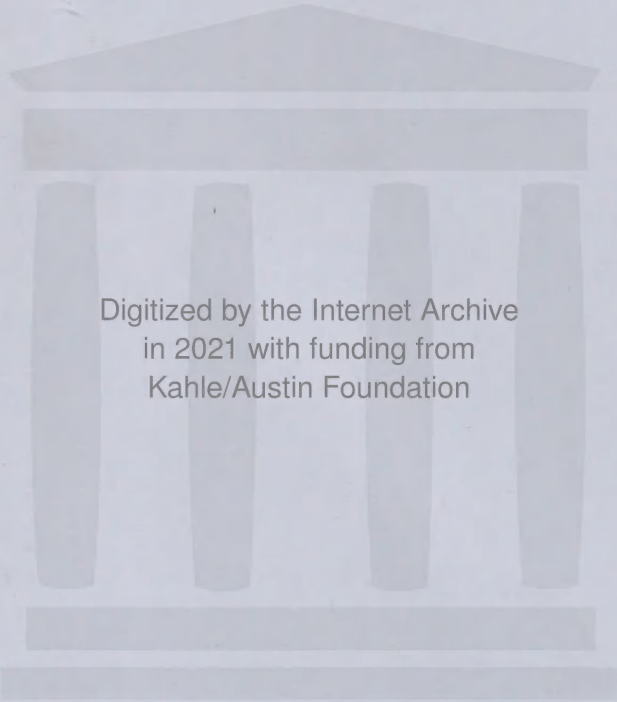
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George Dotrey.





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THE
BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGE,
AND OTHER SERMONS,

BY THE LATE
REV. GEORGE JEFFREY, D.D., GLASGOW.

EDITED BY HIS BROTHER.

With Biographical Sketch of the Author

BY THE
REV. ANDREW THOMSON, D.D., EDINBURGH.

"CHRIST IS ALL."

EDINBURGH:
ANDREW ELLIOT, 17 PRINCES STREET.

1888

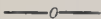
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P R E F A C E.



THIS volume is published at the urgent solicitation of many friends, who were desirous to possess some fitting memorial of my brother.

The Biographical Sketch has been furnished by the Rev. Dr. Thomson, at the special request of the family, and we gratefully acknowledge his appreciative and affectionate tribute to the memory of one who much enjoyed his fraternal fellowship and ministerial intercourse.

The Discourses contained in the volume were designed by their author for the pulpit, and were never intended to appear in print. They have been taken from a large mass of manuscripts, and have passed through the press with only a few mere verbal corrections. The four at the close of the volume were prepared for the special occasions noted. The others were all written in the ordinary course of his ministry, and may thus be

regarded as a fair sample of his regular pulpit ministrations. They are now given to the public, with the prayer that, by the blessing of the Master whom my brother so long and so lovingly and faithfully served, they may be made to promote the interests of the gospel of Christ.

ROBERT T. JEFFREY.

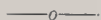
ADELPHI HOUSE, DENNISTOUN,
GLASGOW, *April* 2, 1888.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.



IN writing the following biographical sketch, the author can at least lay claim to one qualification for his service, that he enjoyed the friendship and confidence of its subject during the whole of his lengthened public life. This means that he both knew and loved him well. Though he does not attempt to build an elaborate monument, he has a sacred satisfaction in laying a simple flower upon his brother's grave.

GEORGE JEFFREY was a native of Leitholm, a little rural village in Berwickshire, where he was born October 1, 1815. He was the son of parents of the good old Scottish type, in whose character there was united much natural intellectual force and practical shrewdness with robust and cheerful piety; and who, in the exercise of their parental authority tempered by affection, trained their children to fear and honour them from love, and in their thorough and systematic Bible and catechetical instruction, illustrated by consistent living, made their "godly upbringing" one of the chief ends of their married life. Many a time we have heard our departed friend, especially in his later years, bear grateful and glowing testimony, along with his younger brother, to the priceless benefits which they had derived from this home education, and to the imperishable veneration with which they cherished the memory of both parents. The picture

of the boy seated on his mother's knee and repeating one or more of the answers in the Shorter Catechism, which she afterwards explained to him in her fine border Doric, is one to be remembered.

He received the usual elementary education in the parish school of Eccles; and probably a good deal more than this, which many of the parochial teachers in those days were able to give. The tradition is that he was never punished; it is certain that he was a favourite with his master, and this we can well believe, for he never was a trifler or a deceiver. And, as he would carry his natural energy and buoyancy with him from the school-bench to the playground, he was likely to be a favourite also with his playmates, all the more that the boy's open and beaming countenance prepossessed others in his favour, and made it difficult to suspect him either of meanness or of vice.

We have his own testimony to the fact that his religious impressions were early, but in respect to the precise time when the truths of religion obtained the mastery in his heart and became the ruling motive power in his life,—which the Scriptures describe by conversion or the new birth,—we have no definite information. Various recollections favour the impression that the great change took place some time before he passed away from beneath the parental roof. This is frequently the case in genuinely Christian families, where things are looked upon and judged in the light of the Bible. And day and date are of little account, if we can only infer the reality of the change from its effects. We do not need to look to the east in order to assure ourselves that the sun has risen, if we see the landscape beginning to be bathed in light, and unveiling its beauty.

In 1830, having now reached the age of fifteen, Mr.

Jeffrey came to Edinburgh, and entered as a student in the Arts curriculum of the University. We underestimate the importance of such a step as this to a mind like his, when we restrict its influence to the benefit he receives in the class-room or within the college walls. Coming from a little country village to a city like Edinburgh, with its great public buildings and its older structures and monuments clustering with history, and brought nearer, as it were, to the beating heart of a nation, there is no little unconscious education to be got by an opening and observant mind, from the new circle of associations in the midst of which he is placed. Our young student felt this, while, at the same time, he entered with keen zest upon the courses of classical and philosophical studies that now lay before him, inviting him to new fields of knowledge and presenting new problems for thought. One of his few fellow-students that survive, Dr. James Taylor, informs us that, among his crowd of students, Professor Pillans was not slow to detect in young Jeffrey the diligent worker and the expanding mind greedy of knowledge, and to give him many signs of approval and encouragement. The effect of this was to quicken in the student's mind a taste for the Latin classics, which clung to him through life. Probably the taste had begun in the parish school, for many teachers in that age excelled in Latin. But the professor developed and guided it. So much was this the case that, to the end of his life, Mr. Jeffrey always kept on his writing-table some of the Latin classics, in whose pages he could regale himself after severer studies, using them as a sort of mental alterative or playground, his power and facility in Latin composition not unfrequently finding scope in letters written in Latin to friends with classical tastes and attainments kindred to his own.

Another life epoch came. In the month of August 1833, after passing the entrant examinations prescribed by the United Secession Presbytery of Edinburgh, Mr. Jeffrey was received as a student into the Theological Hall of that Church, which then held its brief annual sessions in the autumn months of August and September. His face was now turned to the Christian ministry as the shining goal of all his preliminary studies. Each of its four professors had his own distinctive gifts, and our student, now more than ever in his congenial element and thirsting for sacred learning, many a time acknowledged, in no stinted terms, the good which he had received from each of them. He was accustomed to speak with grateful admiration of Dr. Mitchell, who did good to his students far beyond his lectures, in the moral power of his character,—in whom saintly beauty and apostolic dignity were united as we may imagine them to have been in the beloved disciple, lending an additional charm and influence to everything that he said, and falling upon the minds of the students like dew from the Lord. His morning prayers were rich in holy thoughts, and fragrant as with the spices of paradise. Dr. Brown's lectures in Biblical exegesis were also of special advantage to him, and did much to produce within him and direct that taste for exegetical preaching by which his ministry afterwards became distinguished and enriched. He held strongly by that eminent Biblical scholar's often-repeated maxim, that "all good preaching must be founded on good exposition," and that there could be no higher function of a Christian minister than to bring out of a verse or a paragraph the particular truths which the Spirit of God had put into it. God forbid that the practice should ever become common in our Scottish pulpits, when the text shall not be the root out of which

the discourse springs and develops itself, but a mere peg or nail on which any discourse may be hung, and when the forenoon "lecture" shall have come to be regretfully remembered as one of the "lost arts."

The shortness, at that time, of the annual sessions of the Theological Hall in Edinburgh put it in the power of Mr. Jeffrey to devote some of his time during the months of winter and spring to private tuition, the fees derived from which made him gradually independent of home resources, which had never been stinted or grudged. In this important formative period of his life, he showed a wisdom and foresight deserving to be imitated: for, not content with the usual stereotyped curriculum of study required of aspirants to the Christian ministry, he took advantage of the opportunities afforded by his residence in Edinburgh, of diverging at times from the beaten path, though not deserting it, and attending on some of the most important science classes, such as chemistry and physiology, all of which not only widened the horizon of his knowledge, but were afterwards made to "pay tithes" to the pulpit and the pastorate. He even sat as a private student in some of the law classes, and became acquainted with those great principles of jurisprudence on which the laws of all civilized countries are based; and, as in the case of some of the greatest Puritan ministers, such as Matthew Henry and others, who served for a season or two in a scrivener's office, found many side lights reflected by these studies on the word of God. And there was a mightier fascination and a higher benefit than in any of these; for in his attendance on the lectures of Dr. Chalmers, who was then in the afternoon glow of his professorship, he not only added to his theological stores, but received deepened convictions of the divinity and the power of evangelical truths, and

holy impulses, whose influence remained and wrought within him to the end of life. The power of such a soul as that of Chalmers was not to be measured by his instructions, but also by the lifelong fire of enthusiasm which he kindled in many of the best minds.

It was during those precious and happy years that the writer of these pages first became acquainted with George Jeffrey, and formed with him an unbroken friendship which advancing years only tended to strengthen and to hallow. And even then, in his love of study, in his gravity and native dignity, brightened by a vivacity which was perennial, in his transparent openness and readiness to deny himself for others, and in his manly devotion, those qualities had begun to bud and to reveal themselves, which became so conspicuous in his riper years.

With the usual periods of his student life ended, and unusually equipped and furnished for the work of the Christian minister, Mr. Jeffrey, after the wonted elaborate trials and examinations of that period, received licence to preach the gospel from his Presbytery of Edinburgh, and was at once sent forth on his probation among the vacant charges.

His probationary period was one of the shortest. He had scarcely time to spread his wings. In Mile End, one of the eastern suburbs of Glasgow, and in the midst of smoky chimney-stalks, cotton factories, and blazing foundries, a new congregation had recently been formed, consisting of somewhat less than fifty members, with three elders. This little flock hastened to invite the promising young preacher to come among them and be their minister. And the decision was in keeping with the man's disinterestedness.

There were other vacant churches at the time, offering more lucrative incomes, and demanding less labour, but

his purpose was formed. Not even giving himself an opportunity of appearing in their pulpits as a candidate, he promptly accepted the call of the little flock; and, with the promise of a stipend of only £150 a year, and with the place of worship built indeed, but by far the greater part of its debt unpaid, he at once consented "without stick or stop" to come among them and to share with them in the certain difficulties and struggles of many coming years. The step was not taken in self-confidence, but in faith, and perhaps also from a strong unwillingness to "build on other men's foundation." He was ordained minister of London Road Church on December 5, 1838. The increase in his congregation began at once, alike in numbers and in moral strength, though the growth was not rapid, but steady and solid, more resembling that of the oak than of the willow. In the course of ten years its membership had reached the mark of 700; at which mark it continued to the end of his long ministry, the members with their children being sufficient to the last to fill their commodious house of prayer.

The explanation of all this growing success is not far to seek. The character and quality of his ministry were, under God, above all things the cause and explanation of his prolonged and solid prosperity. George Jeffrey owed nothing of his ministerial attractions and success to mere novelties and eccentricities, or unhealthy forms of excitement. These were things which, one might almost say, from his natural constitution, he eschewed and despised. His people were not slow to see that he had given himself heart and soul to his work among them, and that he recognised the care of *their* souls as pre-eminently his sphere. Nor were they slow to discern that his lectures and sermons, from week to week, bore the distinct marks of one who recognised what "an awful place

the pulpit is," and who would not serve God with that which cost him nothing. But the supreme secret of his acceptance and success was the fact that he preached a full and pure gospel. He expatiated on those great truths of which Christ is the centre and the life, as the bird rejoices in the sunlight. This was his soul's element. It might have been said of him, as the late Lord Shaftesbury said of himself, that he was "an evangelical of evangelicals." Never from his pulpit, when he preached in it, did the trumpet give an uncertain sound. With equal distinctness and fulness did he magnify the sovereignty of divine grace and proclaim the universality and freeness of the gospel invitations. There never was any whittling away of doctrines, or unworthy concession and insidious explanation, until scarcely anything was left for faith to lay hold upon, but a cloud or a shadow.

And then he spoke in full heart-sympathy with what he preached. It was experienced and appreciated truth, uttered with an eloquence that was natural to him, and with a fervour of spirit which was beyond and above all the rhetoric of the schools, and which belonged in fact to another and a higher region.

There was one practice in his early ministry, which no doubt operated, in more than one way, in promoting the prosperity of his congregation. I refer to the Sabbath evening monthly lectures which he delivered during the first six years of his pastorate, and which, partly on account of the more discursive and varied character of his subjects and their designed adaptation to young and inquiring minds, especially those who might be perplexed by speculative difficulties in religion, attracted multitudes into the ranks of his hearers beyond the membership of his church, and gathered around him crowded assemblies.

These extraordinary evening services, of which there should always be a certain number in every large city, greatly widened the sphere of his influence, brought not a few to decision in religion who had previously only been hesitating and halting inquirers. But the collections given at these monthly lectures did not materially reduce the grievous congregational debt which churches who have similarly suffered have found to be not only a burden but a bugbear, dispiriting the people, and handicapping, if not entirely crushing the life out of every effort of benevolence. It was not until 1865 that, through persevering personal effort on the part of the minister, the debt was entirely swept away.

In these facts we have referred mainly to Mr. Jeffrey's direct influence in the pulpit; but there were engagements outside the pulpit which were admirably subsidiary to his public ministry, without which indeed no ministry is complete, and the minister may almost be said to work with only one hand. Pre-eminent among these, were his Bible-classes for both sexes, to which he attached a high importance, and in which he took an almost enthusiastic delight. George Gilfillan used to affirm, with something perhaps of the exaggeration of friendship, that his friend Jeffrey's classes were the best conducted in the British empire. Certain of his plans are particularly worthy of imitation. He first delivered a short lecture on the prescribed subject, and then, immediately after, proceeded to examine the class on what had been said. The two sexes were arranged on different sides of the class-room, and each scholar was required to sit in a particular seat, which was numbered. In this way, with his roll-book in his hand, he was able not only to detect where there was an absentee, but who the absentee was, and, in a few moments, to gauge the condition of his class in respect

to attendance. And while the order and discipline were excellent, the spirit which animated and guided the pastor was yet more to be admired. He saw in his classes the nursery of the church, the future congregation, and he was accustomed to say that, independently of additions from without, a congregation might be maintained in its bulk and efficiency out of its own children. Out of this profound sense of the importance of his adult classes grew a most elaborate and conscientious preparation for their instruction. It was not enough that he should have the consciousness of fully understanding the doctrine or truth which was to be the subject of the evening's lessons and the sources of its Scriptural evidence; he must have considered beforehand the best method of stating and illustrating the topic, so as to arrest the interest and obtain for it a fast hold of the minds of his scholars. And in this department of his pastorate his labour was eminently successful. His classes were exceptionally large. He remained at stated times in his vestry to converse with scholars who were perplexed by difficulties that they could not solve, or vexed by temptations which were as "the fiery darts of the wicked one." How many an inquirer yet living owes to those interviews a blessed and undying memory ! It is no matter of wonder that those class meetings, which were so often in his thoughts, were the subject of frequent conversation ; and he had a true pastor's pleasure, in the retrospects of his later ministry, in repeating from memory the long list of students and of ministers of the gospel and missionaries of the cross in far-off lands, who, for a succession of seasons, had sat at his feet.

I must refer with earnest commendation, derived from long personal experience, to my friend's practice in the case of catechumens, or applicants for Church membership. The instructions and examinations in the Bible class did

not appear to him to be sufficient in connection with this great crisis in the individual's spiritual life. He sought to see each of the young applicants alone; for he wished not only to ascertain the amount and clearness of their religious knowledge, but to make sure, as far as possible, that they were the real subjects of personal religion, before he could sanction their admission into the fellowship of the Church. It was an opportunity for producing impressions which was not likely to occur a second time in the case of the same individual, and he would not consent to lose it. And the conversation with the minister, when the young person had come to him on such an errand, was almost certain never to be forgotten.

His pastoral visitation also was a most valuable subsidiary to his pulpit ministrations. This was no mere exchange of courtesies and miscellaneous talk, but a real and systematic exhorting and praying from house to house. He was understood to have come on that day on sacred official duty, and with the old Jewish salutation in his heart, if not formally on his lips, "Peace be upon this house." He made it a part of his work at such times to read himself "up to date" in the individual or family history, and then to take the whole and weave it skilfully into the texture and tissue of his prayer. By this means he kept himself in touch with his members, and literally knew them all by name. People were all the more likely to be in their pews on the Sabbath, who had not long before been receiving advice and consolation from his lips at their own fireside. On the Sabbath itself, it was his custom to be in his pulpit some minutes before the hour of worship, looking around him and seeing that his people were in their places, and the moment the timepiece struck the hour, he arose to begin the service. This punctuality in the minister produced punctuality in the people.

It is time that I should mention that on October 4, 1842, nearly four years after his ordination, Mr. Jeffrey was married to Miss Barbara Ritchie. She was the third daughter of Dr. John Ritchie, minister of the Secession Church, Potterrow, Edinburgh, who was well known, two generations back, as a powerful preacher, and prominent in controversies and on platforms. Mr. Jeffrey had been a member of his congregation during the many years of his student life. It was a happy but short-lived union, during which four children were born to the young parents. But it was chequered by bereavements. Two of the children died in early infancy; another, a lovely boy, at the age of six years; and before this, in the summer of 1849, the young mother, after months of hoping against hope, had been summoned away by consumption. In the course of little more than seven years, death had come four times and knocked at Mr. Jeffrey's door, calling him to carry the dust of beloved ones to the open grave. The Master was sitting as a refiner over His gold, as He again and again tried it in the fire. And it was not in vain. The trial of his faith was "more precious than gold which perisheth." There was deep sorrow, but quiet submission. There are other schools than Theological Halls in which ministers are trained for their sacred work. The servant of the Lord was being taught how to suffer, and how to understand the heart of sufferers, and, by the Divine consolations with which he was comforted, learning how to comfort others. One daughter alone remains, having been married in early womanhood to an English clergyman, Mr. Dacre of Irthington, Northumberland.

While Mr. Jeffrey's labour was mainly and dutifully concentrated on his pulpit and his pastorate, it was by no means restricted to these. In these times, it is of first

importance that, in all our cities and larger towns, there should be a certain number of Christian ministers who are naturally qualified for speaking with acceptance and effect on the platform as well as in the pulpit, and who are ready to take a leading part in promoting the great philanthropic movements of the age. They should be there, in the name of that very Christianity of which they are the teachers. And, on the principle of selecting the fittest, the public choice is not long in putting its hand upon those who possess such special gifts. Things are not in their right state, and ministers are not in their proper relation to the general community, when Christian teachers stand aloof, or even stand in the rear, of well-devised measures for human progress.

The brother of whom we write possessed the "platform gift;" and, particularly in the earlier years of his ministry, was prominent in public meetings, identifying himself with great philanthropic and social questions with all the fervour and zest of one whose heart was glowing with the spirit of self-devotedness, and who had set up before himself a high ideal of what a minister of Christ ought to be. In such causes as those of slave emancipation, national education, temperance, disestablishment, and religious liberty, he was at home; and not least in seeking to preserve the integrity and sanctity of the Day of Rest, which the Divine Lawgiver declared to have been "made for man," and which has been "enshrined amid the eternal verities of the moral law." There was a force and bluff honesty in his speaking, a fearlessness which grew out of deep conviction, and all this, associated with his broad and burly form and fine open countenance, which made men willing to listen to him, and an evident mastery of his subject, which made them feel that they were rewarded for listening.

Though, perhaps, there may have been times in which the energy of the speaker, in denouncing some great wrong or exposing some plausible fallacy, verged on excess, and, as one onlooker good-humouredly remarked, he seemed about to sweep away not only the objections but the objectors. We obtain a glimpse of our friend in one of those scenes of high excitement, when, some years after the memorable Disruption out of which the Free Church was born, deputies who had returned from the Southern States of America were giving an account, in a great public meeting in John Street Church, of the help and sympathy which they had received. Referring at one part of his speech to the money which had been contributed from some of the Southern slave-holding churches, and turning to one of the delegates, Mr. Jeffrey said, with tremendous energy, "Cast back the impious gift." This stirred the audience into enthusiasm. And when, a moment afterwards, bringing down his heavy cane upon the platform, he added, "No pro-slavery minister shall ever enter my pulpit," the excitement of the vast multitude became so great as to make it difficult to restrain it within safe limits. It is well known that the money was sent back, and that the Free Church came forth out of the fiery ordeal unstained.—But the claims of other work, to which the choice of his brethren called him, made his presence as a speaker on the platform gradually become more rare; though his interest in the great public questions never died out or even diminished; and as a member on the boards and committees of religious societies and public institutions, he laboured quietly on in many a good cause; and, as an occasional deputy to London, in interviews with members of Government, helped to ripen more than one good measure for legislation, seeking the good alike of the Church and of the commonwealth.

The work to which we have just referred, to which his brethren had already called him, and which, next to the duties of his pulpit and pastorate, was henceforth to engross the greater part of his time, was that of clerk to the Presbytery of Glasgow. At the time when he undertook this office, the Presbytery included within its jurisdiction and oversight all the churches connected with his denomination in Glasgow on both sides of the Clyde, as well as those of neighbouring towns and villages, and was by far the largest presbytery in his Church. The duty of recording its proceedings in its minutes, of arranging its business and papers, and of conducting its almost daily correspondence, must have been very burdensome. Nor was it an easy thing to be the successor of Dr. Kidston, with his extraordinary gift of reflecting, in his minutes for the month, the proceedings of his Presbytery, with an accuracy and a felicity of phrase which scarcely ever needed to be challenged. But he loved his brethren, and enjoyed intercourse with them. They had given him their confidence, and the work itself was congenial to his tastes. And his co-presbyters were not long in discovering that he was a man of order and energy, who refused to do anything by halves. If George Jeffrey had been a tradesman, nothing could have tempted him to "scamp" his work.

He set himself, at once and with a will, to the work of mastering the Church laws, and to acquiring a thorough acquaintance with the order and forms of procedure in Church courts. He knew, moreover, to an extent which few did, the underlying principles and the wide experience on which these rules were based. And beyond this, he was skilful in applying them to existing circumstances and exigencies. These two qualities are not always combined in the same person, just as, in the healing art, you

may sometimes meet with a learned physician who is not a good practitioner. And when he had once looked at a matter deliberately and all round, and given his opinion and advice regarding it, it was no easy matter to dislodge him from his position. Long before he reached the end of his lengthened stewardship, he had come to be generally regarded as the best authority on Church rule and order in his denomination. Such a man, with such qualities, was invaluable to his large Presbytery. Security was thus given that its work would both be well and speedily done; and time would not be lost by blundering or hesitancy, or in tedious debating in order to find out the right way. It was cleverly said by a Glasgow periodical, given to caricature which was not usually ill-natured, that "Dr. Jeffrey was not merely the clerk of Presbytery, but the Presbytery." But this was only a clever joke. He never assumed the airs of a dictator. And where his advice, the fruit of wide knowledge and of ripe experience, commended itself to the judgment of his brethren, what good was to be gained by disputing it? There are instances memorable in the history of his Presbytery when his advice and action saved it from serious difficulties and complications. It was the same in the annual meetings of the Supreme Court of his Church. He was "an honourable counsellor." On several occasions, when the discussions of the Synod had become almost hopelessly tangled, I have seen him rise, and, in a few clear and terse sentences, solve the problem, unloose the tangled skein, and set the court on its feet again. It is generally understood that, for the present matured state of its book of rules and forms of procedure, the United Presbyterian Synod is more indebted to him than to any other man.

There are few more unwelcome services which we can

imagine to devolve upon a Presbytery clerk than that of preparing a libel against a brother who is charged with unsoundness in the faith, and in whose sincerity and amiability the writer of the libel firmly believes. Once at least this duty devolved on Dr. Jeffrey, and he undertook it with mingled firmness, fidelity, and pain. The libel was written confessedly with great ability. But the evidence of absolute fairness and the entire absence of all unkindly feeling was such, that the libelled brother, while the case was still in process, spoke of Dr. Jeffrey with undiminished respect and kindness, and after the libel had served its end, the two men were fast friends to the end of life. The facts were honourable to both.

Nor was it in Presbyteries and Synods alone that Dr. Jeffrey's Church received the benefit of his special gifts. The occasions were almost innumerable in which he was consulted by ministers, and sessions, and deputies from congregations in times of depression, perplexity, or threatened discord; and in which, sometimes by personal interviews, and at other times by long and elaborate letters, not unfrequently written in the far hours of midnight, he succeeded by encouraging suggestions in dispelling despondency, or, by seasonable advice, in preventing the spark from spreading into a destructive conflagration. Nor were the occasions few, in which he travelled great distances, to meet with congregations and advise with them in extremities; and when, after patiently hearing their case and telling them his honest convictions, he succeeded in restoring among them the priceless blessing of peace, and in urging them forward in united action, while "forgetting the things which were behind." His position was often like that of a consulting physician, called in when matters were looking alarming, or the pilot signalled for, when the ship was

drifting or had lost its way. His very presence was inspiring, for the people believed in his common sense, his fearless honesty, his shrewdness, fertility of resource, and sympathetic readiness to enter into the circumstances of others and to make them his own.

In 1856 a great addition was made to our friend's happiness through the settlement of his brother, Dr. Robert Jeffrey, as pastor in the church of Caledonia Road, Glasgow, his proved ability and popular gifts in Denny having attracted the notice and kindled the desires of the young City congregation. It would be difficult to describe in too strong language the affection which existed between these two men. It exceeded the average love even of brothers. There was something of the father as well as of the brother in the affection of George, who was older than Robert by a few years; while in the younger man there were a filial veneration and a leaning trust mingled with the fraternal love which was common to both. There was a naturalness in the fact that such two brothers, though the spheres of their ministry in Glasgow were remote from each other, should not be content to live separately; and they built for themselves a double domicile, which they and their families should occupy, the one the north, and the other the south section of Adelphi House in Dennistoun, the two sections being virtually united by a door, which in many respects made it one dwelling. There is beauty, and something more than beauty,—consolation, in the suggestion that, now that “one is not, for God has taken him,” after all, it is only a door that divides between them still; the door, which has been opened to receive him into the upper mansions, will be opened again, and the time for this is in God's keeping.

On sacramental occasions, church anniversaries, and

other seasons, we have been a guest in one or other section of the Adelphi House; at such times, it was the invariable practice for the two households to become one family group, and the picture of mutual affection, sanctified by a cheerful piety, seemed to us a model of what Christian homes ought to be. At a later period, Dr. Jeffrey's father was welcomed into the family group. For thirty-three years he had been an elder in the church of the well-known Dr. Adam Thomson of Coldstream. Soon after his removal to Glasgow, bringing with him his ripe experience, he was elected into the session of his son's church in London Road.

If any one who only saw our friend, in a Presbytery or Synod, laying down the rule on a point of Church order, so far misunderstood his character as to think of him as a dry and starched ecclesiastic, half an hour at Dennistoun, in the midst of the family group of which he was the natural centre, and with a man of kindred spirit, would have been sufficient to undeceive him. We have met in our day with men of such stiff propriety, "made up" men, who were afraid to be natural, artificial automatons, cold cinders in whom all the fire of affection seemed to have been burnt out. But our brother was a man of a far different mould and temper. Never losing a certain dignity of bearing which was natural to him, or descending to trifling frivolity, he was kindly, self-forgetting, and often playful, so as to shed sunshine around him, and to make you feel at ease. It was in such circumstances that men saw how truly human he was, how warm and wide in his sympathies,—how extensive was his knowledge of science and literature and of the phases of modern thought,—how interested he was in everything that was likely to work for human enlightenment, purity, and happiness; and, like the true minister

of Christ that he was, with what watchful readiness he sought to interject, without forcing, references to the "unseen," as if he had in his mind the saying of Mr. Pool, the commentator, after a period of general conversation with his friends: "Brethren, a word about Christ before we part."

And, claiming to be one of those who belonged to the circle of his "inner friends," what shall we say of him in this relation? He was not like some of those whom we have encountered in life, who love you, not for what you are, but for what you have, whose friendship entirely consists in an expectation of favours, and depends on your ability to further their selfish ends, and which ceases when "the well is dry," or when they have no more favours to seek. He was a man capable of the strongest and most disinterested affection. There was nothing within the compass of his ability, that he would not do for a brother. With what confidence did one go to him for sympathy in sorrow, or for advice in difficulty! How sure he was to make our case his own, and to think it out as he looked at it on all sides! How safe was a matter of confidence in his keeping! He knew much of the divine satisfaction of "bearing one another's burdens." In some of the crises of our own life we have felt ourselves strengthened by his very presence, and by the grasp of a hand that seemed to bear an electric signal from his heart to ours. You were sure also that you had the benefit of his prayers as well as of his counsels, and that you would be "spoken for by him to the King." Outside the inner circle of his friends, he was accessible to all classes, the "brother of low degree" as well the "man with the gold ring;" and in the noiseless charities which he dispensed out of a treasury which required frugality in its administration,

“the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him.”

We do not wish to convey the impression that our brother had not a sterner side of character, which showed itself unmistakeably when circumstances seemed to make it seasonable. We should have admired him less, if this feature had been absent. He could, indeed, endure conceited stupidity or prosing and dreary commonplace with creditable patience; but from meanness, or moral cowardice, or uncharitableness that magnified the reports of evil in others and appeared secretly to glory in their faults, or unfaithfulness in ministers that paltered with words in a double sense and preached against truths to which they had vowed allegiance, he turned away with undisguised aversion and recoil.

We pause only for a moment to mention that on 25th July 1867 Dr. Jeffrey entered a second time into the marriage relation. The lady of his choice was one of congenial spirit, and was in every way fitted, had she been spared in health, to add to her husband's happiness and usefulness. She was the fourth daughter of a well-known and much respected citizen of Edinburgh, Robert Laidlaw, Esq., Newington.

After he had reached the middle period of his ministry, our brother made repeated visits to the Continent of Europe, going so far even as Austro-Hungary and the principalities of the Danube, and even penetrating into the dominions of the Czar. He liked to venture into comparatively unfrequented paths, and to see the people with their national habits and characteristics less modernized than in the great cities. The practice did him good both physically and mentally, for even the routine of a busy pastorate is all the better of being relieved at times by change. And to those whose

mental eye has been educated by previous reading and reflection, who have a natural faculty of observation, and who are able to converse in the language of the people, a month or two of travel is as profitable as wading through a hundred volumes. Dr. Jeffrey found this to be the case, and came back on each occasion laden with facts, and impressions, and "memory pictures," some of the greatest advantages being, that he could live over again and again former scenes and incidents, and that he could think ever afterwards with deepened interest about the lands and the people he had visited. In the case of a Christian minister, the pulpit gains in freshness what it may have seemed to lose by his temporary absence.

As might have been anticipated, the grave minister met occasionally in his travels with experiences that had a tinge of the ludicrous about them. His dress, when travelling, was not generally of a kind to suggest thoughts of gown and bands; even the professional hat was thrown aside for something more easy and capable of tear and wear. One day, while he was sitting at a *table d'hôte* in a German town, a company of young ladies entered, blooming with health and overflowing with hilarity, and sat down on the opposite side of the table. Their eyes were turned to the stranger, and, while they did not discover in his dress any marks of the sacred profession, they were not slow in concluding that he was an Englishman. Never suspecting that he understood their language, they became critical, and kept up each other's laughter by remarks on his appearance, which were not always complimentary. Our traveller allowed this fire of criticism to go on for a time unchecked, but what was their astonishment and annoyance when they heard him suddenly address the waiter in sentences of good German! They relieved both

themselves and him from embarrassment by speedily vanishing out of the room.

Not satisfied with wandering among the old monarchies and principalities of Eastern Europe, Mr. Jeffrey longed to visit the New World; and, crossing the Atlantic in 1853, spent several weeks in the United States, with New York as his centre. The youth and freshness, and immense natural resources of the great republic, with the new forms of political and social life, greatly interested him. The magnitude of its natural objects, whether in its rivers, or lakes, or waterfalls, stirred into life all the poetry that was in him. With an astonishment that exceeded expectation, he marked the keen enterprise and hope of its people, with the rapid growth of villages into great cities during less than the time in which a youth grows into manhood. In the religious life and Christian organization of its churches, nothing charmed him more than the importance attached to the Sabbath schools, the character of their teachers, their age and social position, and the perfection of the arrangements for making them both efficient and attractive. The man who had excelled so much in his classes at home was the readiest to confess the general superiority of the Sabbath schools of America over those of his own country, and to seize upon features of improvement which might be incorporated into his own system when he returned. He was readily welcomed into pulpits, and one proof of his acceptability was his being followed, not long after his return to Scotland, by a call from the Jane Street Presbyterian Church in New York to become their minister. It is not unlikely that the discovered excellence of his gifts as a preacher, as well as the knowledge of his solid and varied learning, led in part, at least, to his receiving, at a somewhat later period, from the University of New York the honorary

degree of Doctor of Divinity, a merited tribute to which public opinion at home gave its unanimous sanction.

Nothing gave him greater delight than his meeting with old members of his church in Glasgow, who had emigrated, and settled and prospered in the New World, whose faces beamed at the unexpected sight of the pastor of their early days, and who were not slow to bring up old memories, and to bear grateful testimony to the undying influences for good which they had derived alike from his preaching and from his pastoral care. We may notice at this point that there were repeated instances in which old members, on a return visit to their native land, found their way to the church of their youth in London Road, and were pleased to drink once more out of the old well. One instance has come to our knowledge which we shall allow the old member to relate in his own Scottish Doric, which had retained all its force and flavour after an absence of half a century. He had come from Ottawa, where he had become, in the course of years, the master and proprietor of a large engineering establishment on the banks of the Ottawa river. On the Sabbath after his arrival in Glasgow, he went to hear his old minister, and he thus described what took place:—

“He wasna called Doctor when I joined his kirk, but only plain Mr. George. I was forward in good time, and told the gentleman that was stan’in’ at the plate in the lobby that I had been connected wi’ the congregation five-and-twenty years ago; and I inquired about a lot o’ the elders and the members that I knew in my young days, but they were maistly a’ dead.

“I was put into the minister’s ain pew, and when he came in I saw little odds on him. He was aulder-like, but there wasna a failed inch o’ him, and I hadna heard a sermon like what he preached since I heard himsel’.

It was fu' o' matter an' direc'. After the service was over, a message was sent for me to come to the vestry. The Doctor gave me a good firm shake o' the hand, and, looking into my face, said, 'I think I can tell your name; you're a Paterson.'

" 'Quite right, Doctor.'

" 'And I think I can tell your Christian name,—it's Matthew.'

" 'Quite right again,' said I. After a crack about old days, and how I was gettin' on, an' my friends an' his, I said, 'Dr. Jeffrey, how does it happen that your bow, as far as I can judge, abides about its full strength, when sae many o' the gude auld elders and members are in the ither world?'

" 'Because,' said he, 'the Lord has been my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler and my high tower. Let us bless His name together.' We both went down on our knees in the vestry, and such a prayer I never heard, and never will forget. I've often thought of writing to the Doctor. If you see him, will you tell him that you saw me, and that we're a' weel, and that I send him my VERY BEST respects?"¹

The gentleman to whom we are indebted for this touching story, promised to do so as they parted. The first thing he saw in the newspapers on his arrival in Scotland was the announcement that Dr. Jeffrey was dead!

It would be an inexcusable omission, were we not to refer to the deep practical interest which Dr. Jeffrey took in the work of Mr. Moody, on occasion of his two prolonged visits to Glasgow. We had been the witness of the earlier work of this good evangelist in Edinburgh, and in our own place of worship, on nine successive

¹ *Bits about America*, by John Strathesk.

evenings, had seen hundreds of earnest inquirers,—soldiers from the Castle, sailors from Leith, artisans, servants, physicians, merchants, old men of eighty, fathers and mothers, youths of fourteen and fifteen,—moved by one common impulse and burdened with the one inquiry, “What must I do to be saved?” We had seen the risings of peace in many a heart that had previously been racked with terror or tossed with unrest, the storm turned into a calm, and had received such impressions of the power and presence of the Spirit of God as could never be forgotten. We did not wonder, therefore, when we learned that Dr. Jeffrey was not slow to recognise in Mr. Moody a true messenger of Jesus Christ. Even his natural intellectual gifts attracted him, his good sense, his unfailing tact, his originality and freshness of illustration. But beyond and above this, there was the charm of his utter self-forgetfulness and self-consecration, his holy passion for the conversion of men, his thorough knowledge of the way of salvation, and his remarkable acquaintance with the Bible, obtained, not from the commentaries of men (which he did not despise), but from the comparing of Scripture with Scripture, and from that “prayer ardent which opens heaven and brings down a flood of light upon the soul in audience with the Deity.”

Dr. Jeffrey was not only a friendly onlooker, but a fellow-worker, standing by Mr. Moody and advising him and cheering him; and while he was a means of blessing, he received it back into his own soul in no stinted measure.

In a letter which we have received from his affectionate and like-minded brother, we shall best complete our description:—

“As to Messrs. Moody and Sankey, my brother took a very warm interest and a very active part in the revival

movement on both occasions of these brethren being in Glasgow. Night after night we were at the meetings, and the grand scenes of gracious influence formed the absorbing subjects of thought and conversation at all times. Nothing else was spoken of almost at home. It is refreshing to me to recall these times of blessing. When my brother spoke of them his face became actually radiant, and a smile of holy joy enlightened his whole countenance. Many and many a time since he left us has the sight of him as he then appeared, rejoicing in the Lord and in the Lord's work, been recalled to my mind. I feel just *now* as if I saw him as he appeared *then*. On both occasions of Messrs. Moody and Sankey being here, my brother had them in London Road Church. There were evening meetings for two weeks on each of these occasions, the church crowded every evening, and very many at the after-meetings. These were times of great blessing. My brother and I were generally waiting at the door to welcome the coming of Mr. Moody, and I remember well his peculiar greeting—'*The two sons of Zebedee.*'

"My brother had the idea that many of the anxious inquirers who appeared at the after-meetings suffered loss from not being attended to till their anxiety issued in saving conversion, and so he had a note printed and sent to the minister of every anxious inquirer, that he might be dealt with by him. This was done in connection with every case of anxious inquirers at the London Road meetings."

Long before the period in his ministry of which we are now writing, Dr. Jeffrey's name had come to be regarded with universal respect in the city of his habitation; and his person was one of the most familiar to its citizens as he walked along its crowded streets. His appearance

was one which it was pleasant to look upon, and was not likely to be forgotten, so that, if you had seen him once, you would have recognised him a year hence had you met in the streets of San Francisco, or on the slopes of the Himalaya mountains. His erect, manly, and well-knit form, his intelligent, open countenance, which reminded many of the portraits of Luther, gave you the impression of keen perception and practical wisdom, and of an honesty of aim and purpose of which it would have been difficult to suspect evil. One was almost ready to apply to him what was said of a famous Edinburgh citizen of an earlier age, that "the ten commandments were written on his forehead." It was happily said of him that "he was an interesting Glasgow figure," a part of the civic as well as of the religious life of the great community in which he lived and moved. The consequence was, that men continued to trust and love him, even when they differed from him on great public questions; for he was not a "tide-waiter," watching the popular currents, and placing himself before them, and allowing them to guide his course. He could stand bravely in a minority and beat against the stream, when there seemed to him to be a temporary divergence on the part of the multitude from the right. And it does the heart of a people good, and helps their moral health, when they look from day to day upon a man, who places conscience first in the regulation of all his movements, and who, for forty years or more, has stood before the people of a vast city with an untainted name, on which the arrows of unfriendly criticism could find no mark to aim at. His ministry acquired from this a greatly increased power. His people thoroughly believed in him, and before he entered on the later decades of his work, the long busy sower had already become the rejoicing reaper.

In May 1879 the Synod held its session in the Free Church Assembly Hall, the use of which, at the request of the Synod's Accommodation Committee, had been courteously and cordially granted by the committee of the Free Church who had the charge of the hall. At this meeting the Synod of his Church, with one consenting voice, called him to the Moderator's chair. He had won and merited this honour of presidency in its deliberations at once by his rare measure of capability for its duties, and by the faithful services which he had rendered to the Synod in many of those more important Standing committees, which continue their labours throughout the whole year. Especially did he do yeoman's work in the committee through whose labours, extending over a series of years, the system of its Theological Hall or College for the training of students for the ministry was completely revolutionized,—the short annual session of less than eight weeks being supplanted by a session of nearly six months, corresponding in length with those of the universities,—the professorial staff increased, and the subjects of teaching better selected and arranged so as to meet the wants of the age. The other committee in which he laboured much, and not in vain, was that which framed the well-known Declaratory Act, in which, without changing any doctrine in the Confession of Faith and in the Catechisms, certain passages were explained so as to relieve the uneasiness of some ministers and elders, and the Church was delivered from a state of anxiety and unrest which, if prolonged, might have had disturbing and mischievous effects. Perhaps the outside world is not sufficiently aware of the amount of service for the Church which is done in the Synod's Standing committees, though the names of the workers are never blazoned in newspapers,

and their only record is in the dry lists which swell the bulk of the Synod's minutes.

Our readers will welcome some extracts from his address on taking the chair as Moderator. After expressing his deep sense of the honour which his fathers and brethren had done him in calling him to preside over them, and making touching reference to the roll-call of the dead, which had just been read amid the solemn silence of the Court, and making special mention of the venerated and universally honoured Principal Harper, whose name was on that roll, and of David Anderson and Peter Hamilton of Glasgow, and Thomas Dunn of Melrose, "elders who had obtained a good report," but whose faces they sorrowed that they would see no more, the new Moderator proceeded to unfurl the banner of his Church in a very able statement of its historical origin and denominational position. The quotation which follows is by no means out of date :—

"And now permit me to say that we have reason to be loyally attached to the Church to which we belong. Without laying undue stress on the matter of historical churches, it is of no small moment for our Church to inherit the remembrances and associations of a good and honourable name. The history of our united Church is one of distinctive testimony. We have no reason either to be ashamed of that testimony, or feeble or faint-hearted in displaying its banner in behalf of the truth. Under God, our Church owes its existence as a denomination to the unswerving allegiance of our fathers to the doctrines of divine grace which form the grand subject of all evangelical preaching. This lay at the root of all their testimony. It was because they believed that the course followed by the judicatories of the body which they left, either actually did corrupt, or had a tendency to corrupt those doctrines,

that they continued in a state of secession. The banner which our fathers uplifted is still displayed because of the truth. While there are subjects in our Subordinate Standards in regard to which it has been found desirable to set forth more fully and clearly the view which the Church takes of Holy Scripture, yet it has only been shown that our ministry and people are faithful to the testimony of our fathers in regard to the doctrines of divine grace. These doctrines are a precious heritage. We hold them forth because we hold them fast without wavering, that we may show to the generation to come the power of the Lord. Our Church, as a denomination, has ever sought to be distinguished by the purity of its discipline. It has been careful in the admission to its membership. It has required intelligent profession of faith in Christ and engagement to the duty He enjoins, and of all who are members that they have a walk becoming the gospel. Its practice has been to deal faithfully in the way of discipline with those who offend, and not to tolerate error without adequate censure. This regard for purity of discipline entered as an element into the reasons for our fathers remaining in a state of secession, and it still stands forth as a reason why we are loyally attached to the Church to which we belong. But our Church as a denomination, though both the Erskines and Gillespies are over its whole past history, has ever been distinguished for its faithful assertion and defence of the rights of the Christian people, and in no Church in the land at the present hour are these rights more carefully conserved and strenuously maintained. While she has ever held that none who are not members of Christ's house have a right to a voice in her affairs, to the enjoyment of her privileges, or to the election of her ministers and office-bearers, yet, on the other

hand, she has ever set forth and maintained that all her members have equally a right to all the privileges of the Church, and to the election of those who are to minister to them and to be over them in the Lord. She repudiates the right of any civil power to give what Christ has not given to any who are not members of the Church, a voice in the election of her ministers. She maintains that by the law of Christ's house that right vests in His faithful people alone, but that it is equally the right of all. This has been the distinguishing testimony of our Church over all her history, and maintained, through grace, at the expense of no small sacrifice; and we are still as loyally attached as ever to that precious testimony in behalf of the rights and privileges of the Christian people. It has long been distinctive of the Church to which we belong to declare that the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Head and King of His Church, has therein appointed a form of government distinct from, and not subordinate to, civil government, and to disapprove of all compulsory or persecuting and intolerant principles in religion. He who is the King of nations as well as King of saints has given to the Church and to the State their distinct province and their separate office-bearers. The office-bearers of the one have no right as office-bearers to come within the province of the other; nor can the State come within the province of the Church without compulsion and intolerance. It is not by State alliance, by the arm of the civil power, that the Church is to be supported and protected. Such an alliance is fatal to all the Church's true spiritual independence, and poison to her spiritual life. She depends on her own inherent energies, sustained by the grace of her loving Lord. With no argument but divine truth—no look but love, no wealth but piety, no inheritance but faith—she must in dependence

on divine grace essay her spiritual conquests. If divine truth by the power of the Divine Spirit cannot subdue for her the world to Christ, she has no other divinely-appointed agency to wield. Our Church holds forth as matter of her testimony that the support and extension of Christ's cause is to be provided for by the freewill offerings of His people. If these freewill offerings of the Church's faith and love cannot avail for the support and extension of the gospel, she has no other divinely-appointed resource. Such, however, is the Lord's ordinance, and we are loyally attached to our Church because of its testimony to the Church's spiritual independence, and to the Scripture mode of the support and extension of the gospel. Let me say, in a word more, that we may well be attached to the Church of our fathers. It has ever been in the forefront in missionary enterprise and in every struggle for civil and religious liberty. Our prayers are to be offered, and all our powers are to be consecrated to the furtherance of its well-being. May this be the issue of all the present Synod's deliberations and decisions, to the praise of His name, to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

Dr. Jeffrey's Moderatorship was specially signalized by the rapidity, without hurry, with which the business of the Synod was done. The "work of each day was done in the day," and, generally, at the end of each Sederunt it was found that the programme was exhausted. This was greatly owing to the Moderator's knowledge of forms, and his being able to determine in what way a particular subject might best be taken up. When he was a private member of Court, he never spoke except when he had something to say, and when he did speak it was at the least expense of words and time. And in the chair he sought to induce speakers

to conform to this wholesome practice. In this way both time and temper were saved. There was always a feeling in that Synod that they were "getting along."

One incident occurred during the Synod which touched every heart. His younger brother, Dr. Robert Jeffrey, as Convener of the Synod's Accommodation Committee, had for a series of years done excellent service for the Synod and the Church, in connection with the purchase of the large and spacious buildings in Castle Terrace, Edinburgh, which contain the class-rooms of its Theological College, its mission premises, apartments for the meetings of its committees, and the great hall for its annual assemblies, and for more general public uses. One of the most important of these services was the collection of the funds by which the great structure might be paid, and not a little of this was accomplished through the zeal and well-directed efforts of the younger brother. The gratitude of the Synod was great, and it fell to his brother, as Moderator, to give formal expression to this in appropriate terms. From no lips could the thanks of the unanimous Synod have come with so cordial a welcome. The universal silence that reigned throughout the Court, proved how much its members were in sympathy with both, and prepared the way for the ringing and prolonged applause that followed, an applause which extended to both brothers.

It happened with a peculiar fitness, that, during the currency of his moderatorship, Dr. Jeffrey was called upon formally to open the New College Buildings by special devotional services and an address; on which occasion the members of Synod were present in full force, while a large attendance of the general public, crowding the space not occupied by the Court, testified especially to the interest of the private members of the

denomination. The whole aspect of the great assemblage was imposing and sublime. The address by the Moderator, with which the proceedings of the Synod were closed, was one of historic value, especially as explaining the constitutional rights of the private members of the Church, and of the individual members of her Synod and subordinate Church courts; and, yet more, as stating the circumstances which led to the preparation and adoption of the Declaratory Act, the uses which it was intended to serve, and the sifting discussion, caution and care, with which its every clause was again and again considered, leading at length to its unanimous adoption. Had Dr. Jeffrey done no other service to the Synod during his Moderatorship, his judicious and discriminating statement regarding the Declaratory Act would have entitled him to the gratitude of the Synod and of the Church. We shall enrich our biographical sketch by here introducing the entire address:—

“Fathers and brethren—By the good hand of the Lord upon us, we have now come to the close of the proceedings of the present Synod. I have anew to thank you for the honour you have done me by placing me in this chair, and for the orderliness, brotherly kindness, and Christian courtesy which have marked the conduct of the brethren in all the discussions that have taken place. By the grace of the Master and your help, I have endeavoured to discharge the duties of the office you have assigned to me. I can truly say that you have made the occupancy of the chair an easy task, and all its associations to me only a pleasant remembrance. There are two things on which our Church lays especial stress, and which are of no small moment to her well-being. It is held and declared by her that the door of the Supreme Court is open in a constitutional

way to the humblest member of our communion, and that it is his right and privilege to be heard before the Synod in all matters competent to him as a member of the Church. If there be any member who feels himself aggrieved by the action of any inferior court, he has the right of appeal to you, and the privilege of being heard before you. The right of appeal secures this inalienable privilege to every member of the Church. The right may not always be judiciously asserted, or the privilege wisely used, yet it is a privilege most precious. And then, still further, it is the right and privilege of every member of this Synod, within the limits which our constitutional terms prescribe, fully and freely to state his mind on any subject presented to this court for its consideration and judgment. This also is a right and privilege most precious in its bearing on the Church's welfare. There is nothing more healthful for the human body than to take the wind into its pulses, and there is nothing better for the Synod than the ventilation by full and free discussion of all matters that are legitimately brought before it, if it would preserve intact the bond of brotherhood, and secure the unity and strength of the whole body of professed believers which comprise the visible Church of Christ. Every one who has attended our present meetings of Synod will admit that the matters requiring discussion have been amply and freely discussed. And it must be most gratifying to the Synod, and to the whole Church, to remember that on those matters which may justly be reckoned of vital moment a unanimous decision has been reached. We have great reason to acknowledge the grace and guidance of the Master in an issue so well fitted to fill our hearts with joy. There was one matter of especial importance to the well-being of the Church that was carried by ac-

clamation—the appointment of Professor Cairns to the office of Principal of our Theological College, in the room of the venerable Principal Harper, whose honoured name is dear to all of us, and embalmed in our remembrance. Principal Cairns required no letters of commendation to us, and the Synod felt that he needed no words of commendation by us or for us. The mention of his name for the honourable and important office he now holds was in itself sufficient, for it represented all those graces, gifts, and qualifications which are fitted, through the divine helping, to secure the efficient discharge of its duties. It was especially pleasurable to see how heartily all the members of the theological faculty gave him welcome, and it is our prayer that the Principal and Professors of our United Presbyterian College may long be spared and greatly blessed in all their arduous and responsible labours.

“ There was one other matter of paramount importance brought under the Synod’s consideration, and in regard to which the Synod came to a unanimous decision. The Declaratory Statement anent the Subordinate Standards was adopted and passed into a Declaratory Act by the unanimous voice of the Synod. It is of some importance to remember what action led to the Declaratory Statement being prepared, and how this unanimity in passing it into a Declaratory Act has been reached. Many years ago, in disposing of certain overtures anent the revisal of the Subordinate Standards, the Synod agreed to declare its steadfast adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures—strongly disapproved and condemned the conduct of those persons who, having solemnly professed to give their assent to these Standards, did notwithstanding indulge in denouncing them as erroneous and un-

scriptural, and in impeaching their brethren of the eldership and the ministry with not believing and not preaching the doctrine of them ; and in particular declared that it cannot tolerate the denial or disparagement of these doctrines, commonly called the doctrines of grace, which it has been the glory of this Church in every period of her history to maintain and to preach. In respect, however, of the great importance of the question raised by the overture from the Presbytery of Glasgow, and difficulties attending it requiring graver deliberation, the Synod agreed to appoint a committee to consider the whole subject brought up by it, and report to the Synod in the following year. In terms of this decision, the committee on the Subordinate Standards was appointed, which, at next meeting of Synod last year, laid on the table, as the chief matter of its report, a proposed Declaratory Statement respecting the Standards. The Synod of last year considered the proposed Declaratory Statement, paragraph by paragraph, and unanimously agreed that the said Statement, as adjusted, be approved and sent to presbyteries and sessions for their consideration, instructing them to send any suggestions they might wish to make to the committee. It was after careful regard of all the returns from presbyteries and sessions that the committee, at this meeting of Synod, laid on the table the Declaratory Statement, which again, after having been considered paragraph by paragraph, has been unanimously adopted by the Synod, and passed into a Declaratory Act. It is thus only after lengthened and careful consideration by the committee—after scrupulous regard of the forms whereby the mind of the whole Church, through its presbyteries and sessions, can be fully ascertained, and after full discussion and deliberate consideration by the Synod itself—that this Declaratory

Statement has been passed into a Declaratory Act. It sets forth more fully and clearly the view which the Synod takes of the teaching of Holy Scripture in regard to those subjects on which it has been found desirable to give explanations, and is given forth as the Church's authorized explanations respecting them. It is a matter of special thanksgiving to the Lord, and reason for the Church's unfeigned gratitude, that the unanimous passing of this Declaratory Act has set forth so clearly that our Church as a denomination is loyal, as were our fathers, to the doctrines of divine grace, which ever have been distinctive of her testimony, and which form the grand subject of all evangelical preaching. When any Church becomes faithless to these doctrines, you may write upon her, 'Ichabod, the glory hath departed.' She may present the semblance of a living Church in all her external organizations, but the life has gone out of her. The candlestick may be there, but the light of the Sun of Righteousness which lighted the candle has left it, and it has no light of salvation to diffuse on the dark world around. Ever may our Church, through divine grace and by evangelical preaching, be a light unto the world, holding forth the doctrines of the word of life.

"It is worthy of more than passing notice that over a year of unexampled depression of trade and commerce, and of unparalleled disaster, which has ruined many a family in the land, the contributions from all sources to the scheme for the augmentation of stipends has exceeded the income of the preceding year. The fact testifies to the Church's liberality, and furnishes reason for thanksgiving to God for putting it into the hearts of His people to give so considerably and generously for this scheme, which affects so deeply the comfort of many of our ministers and the well-being of their congregations.

While the Church seeks to provide for the adequate support of the gospel in all her congregations, it is alike her duty and her privilege by evangelistic missionary agency at home to win to Christ, by divine grace through gospel teaching, the lapsed, the ignorant, and careless, and, by missionary agency abroad, to bear the knowledge of Christ's salvation to the ends of the earth. The Saviour's unrepealed commission is still obligatory on all His faithful servants and on all His believing people—'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel unto every creature.' Never was there a time when the Church should be more alive to her duties and responsibilities. The forces of evil are marshalling for the fight. The air is full of the noise of those who are arming for the battle. There are terms of materialistic scepticism, of anti-scriptural beliefs, and of so-called religious opinions, that betoken the assault of fiercer foes than the Evangelical Churches of our land in past days have ever encountered. Let our Church as a denomination take advantage of her present opportunities of work for Christ, and prepare for the coming conflict if it be not even now already begun. And then, no matter how strong be the foe and dread the contest, no matter how loud and long be the noise of the battle, the Church may rest with confidence and comfort on the precious promise to be found at the close of that magnificent psalm which describes the fierceness of the thunderstorm in the grandeur of its triumphant march along the heavens as, in the mightiness of its power, it makes the everlasting hills to bow and the wilderness to tremble—'The Lord will give strength unto His people, the Lord will bless His people with peace.'"

In the last decade of his life, Dr. Jeffrey's health gave occasional signs of failure. He still continued his studies

as before, spending no little time on critical and exegetical readings of the New Testament, and so provident was he in his preparations for the pulpit, in order to prevent hurry and perfunctoriness, and so much did he delight in this part of his work, that there were generally five discourses ready before they needed to be preached. The advantage of this was seen in his sermons. There was no mark of haste or of immature thought, and there was proportion in the treatment of every part of his discourse, never requiring the stereotyped apology of some preachers, that they have not time to do justice to the remaining part of their subject. Still, with the amount of labour scarcely diminished, there were occasional ailments, especially in his vocal organs, which required an absence, during some of the weeks of spring, in warmer climates. There was also a greater readiness to become fatigued with work; a fact which had its meaning to him, and whispered that the iron frame was beginning to suffer through the advance of years. And indications came upon him in other forms, not least in the deaths among ministers which were thinning the ranks of his contemporaries, and even among those who were younger than himself, whose funeral sermons he was called in many instances to preach, and in which the Master seemed to say to him, "Lo, I come," "Be ye also ready." He did not turn away his eyes from these signs, but was rather disposed to say of such providences, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

In those later years, I noticed in him a remarkable growth in spirituality of mind. God's grain was ripening fast for the harvest. In conversations with him, particularly on the Sabbath evenings after a communion, he more than once introduced the subject, stating, among other things, his belief that, from the nature of some of

his ailments and symptoms, he felt his life to be more than usually uncertain, that he expected his death would be sudden when it came, that, while he had no impatient desire for the great change, he had no sense of unwillingness to depart, perhaps even a preference for going, and that he had no fear of death; its terrors were long since gone like darkness before the sunlight. He regarded the call to die "with much the same feeling as if he were asked to pass from one apartment into another." He could have sung with holy Herbert—

"Death, thou wast once an uncouth thing!

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But since our Saviour's death did put some blood
 Into thy face,
 Thou art grown fair and full of grace,
 Much in request, much sought for as a good."

Or in yet higher strain, when looking beyond, "What wonders we shall feel,"

"When we shall see Thy full-eyed love!
 When Thou shalt wake us out of pain,
 And one aspect of Thine spend in delight,
 More than a thousand suns disburse in light,
 In heaven above."

I shall be forgiven one allusion to an event in my own personal history. In the end of March 1887, the jubilee of my ministry was celebrated by my congregation in Broughton Place. At the request of my people, and in fulfilment of my own special desire, Dr. Jeffrey was requested to preach one of the sermons on the jubilee Sabbath. The sermon, prepared for the occasion, was founded on the appropriate text, "Not I, but the grace of God which was with me," and was particularly welcome and suitable to myself, as well as to the large congregation, taking, as its keynote, the thought which should have

been uppermost in my mind at that high landmark in my ministry, that all our real success, in the highest ends of a ministry, is from above, and that to God belongs all the praise. Our hearts had been toned by the sermon; and I can well remember the sense of personal insufficiency on our part as well as of divine forbearance, forgiveness, and never-failing help on the part of our heavenly King, with which both of us looked back through half a century of service in the cause of Christ and of man's salvation. For our friend's jubilee fell to be celebrated in the end of December in the same year, and the understanding between us was that I should pay back my debt to him by preaching in return in connection with his jubilee. Little did either of us think, at that moment of grateful remembrance and hopeful anticipation, that in little more than six weeks I should be called to preach my friend's funeral sermon, and that he would have been called to the celebration of a higher jubilee, in which the angels would take part, as they led him up into the presence of the King.¹

The annual Synod commenced its sittings in Edinburgh in the first week of May 1887, and Dr. Jeffrey was there from the first, ready to interchange with fathers and brethren many a friendly recognition and benediction, after the separation of twelve months. He was able to preside in the Selection Committee, by which the various important committees were to be chosen and recommended for appointment by the Synod; and those who have laboured with him in this work can bear testimony to the conscientious care with which he was accustomed to seek for the right and fittest men in each department of service. Who could have dreamed that the shadow of death had already fallen on that vigorous

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 10.

frame, and that an angel might have whispered in his ear, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee"? It may be mentioned as a touching coincidence that the text of his last address to his prayer-meeting, a few days before, had been, "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you" (2 Cor. xiii. 11).

On the Thursday, after attending the meeting of the Selection Committee, he sought out his brother and told him that he was feeling rather unwell. He was persuaded to leave the Synod, and confine himself to his room for the day. His brother, who occupied the adjoining room, saw that he was very restless during the night, and induced him to agree to return to Glasgow in the morning. As soon as they reached home, he was placed under the care of his friend Dr. Adams, in whose medical advice he had the fullest confidence. As yet there was nothing serious in the symptoms, but he felt weak and far from well. Yet he could not be dissuaded, either by the doctor or by his brother, from preaching, according to previous arrangement, on the coming Lord's day. Accordingly he conducted divine service in the forenoon in Claremont Street Church, and in the afternoon he preached in his brother's church at Caledonia Road. This was his last appearance in the pulpit, and the text of his last sermon was Ps. cxvi. 1, "*I love the Lord.*" The exertion connected with the work of the day so weakened him, that, on his return home from the church, he had to be assisted to his room.

On the Monday, his case assumed a more threatening phase. There was no actual organic disease, but there was much functional derangement of the vital organs, and weak action of the heart. This induced great prostration of the vital powers, which was aggravated by

restlessness and sleeplessness. There were occasions in which his mind wandered, but, even in those temporary wanderings, it was seen what was the ruling bent and tendency of his thoughts. At one time, he imagined himself to be engaged in some extraordinary duty of great difficulty, which demanded the concentration of all his energies in order to success. It was a terrible battle of the soul with almost overwhelming difficulties and against strong and fierce opposition. At length, he announced to a beloved sister who was standing watching at his bedside that the contest was over and the victory won, and, without a moment's delay, he gave thanks to God who had given him the victory. Then, with uplifted hands and with solemn voice, he pronounced the benediction.

For eight days the symptoms increased in urgency, and were hastening on to a crisis. The crisis was reached, and he passed through it in the early morn of Wednesday the 18th. He then fell into a calm and placid sleep, which continued for some hours, and from this sleep he awoke consciously relieved, and with all the alarming symptoms abated. The doctor, who came with grave apprehensions to visit him in the forenoon, when he saw the change, was much pleased, and gave it as his opinion that the strong man had surmounted the crisis, and that he would soon be able to return to his wonted duties. He was, however, cautioned to be upon his guard against over-exertion, as there is a condition called *Embolism*, in which a clot forms in the blood, which, by arresting the circulation, brings the heart to a sudden stop; and the possibility of such a condition was mentioned to him, and was made the basis of an injunction which was pressed upon him, studiously, to avoid all undue effort.

The progress towards recovery steadily continued till

Monday the 23rd. On the forenoon of this day, supported by the bed-rest, and with the help of his brother, he dressed himself with his own hands, and, expressing himself as greatly refreshed, he was cheerfully waiting for the visit of the doctor, that he might make to him the pleasing announcement of convalescence.

We prefer giving the remaining part of the narrative in the touching words of his affectionate brother :

“I had gone from his bedside to my study, when in a short while, through the open door between, I heard a sharp, startling cry from my sister, calling me to ‘come quick to George.’ Hastening thither, I found him with his head leaning back in my sister’s arms, while my other sister was holding him by the hand. His eyes were closed, his breathing calm, his pulse fluttering and intermittent; he was evidently in the article of death. Being thus warned that he was just about to leave us, we commended his departing spirit into the hands of our covenant God. While I was yet speaking in prayer, with my hand in his, the action of the heart stopped, the feeble pulse ceased to beat—our beloved brother was dead. Thus, within a quarter of an hour from the time when there was every hope of a speedy recovery to health and work, without a moan or movement of any kind, or a word of farewell, and while unconscious of the transition, he softly and silently passed through the doorway of death, and was taken home to be with Christ in the Father’s house. The change to him must have come as a sweet and glad surprise, but to us who were left surviving behind it was a crushing bereavement. The suddenness of the stroke of God’s heavy hand, literally stunned us with a great consternation.”

Those last sentences show how true to the experience of such bereaved hearts are the poet's lines,—

“The friends who leave us do not feel the sorrow
Of parting, as we feel it, who must stay lamenting
Day by day,
And knowing when we wake upon the morrow,
We shall not find in its accustomed place
The one beloved face.”

As the day advanced, the tidings of the unexpected death had spread over all Glasgow, and the Church in all its sections felt that it had lost one of its best ministers, and the great commercial city one of its most useful and honoured citizens.

The funeral, which took place on May 27th, presented a most interesting and impressive spectacle, revealing the great and universal veneration and affection which had gathered around the name of the departed minister of Christ. In London Road Church, its pulpit and gallery draped with black and filled with mourners in mourning attire, devotional services were conducted by the Moderator of the United Presbyterian Synod, the Moderator of the North Presbytery of Glasgow, and others. Simultaneously with this, there was a similar service at Adelphi House, the residence of the deceased, at which the Rev. Dr. Black presided. The two companies, having met and been arranged, were formed in procession, the two Presbyteries of Glasgow in twenty-six carriages going before the hearse, and following the hearse, thirteen carriages with chief mourners, members of session and managers, members and adherents of the congregation, and last of all, the general public on foot. Then the long line of mourners wended their way slowly and solemnly to Sighthill Cemetery, picturesquely situated towards the north-east of Glasgow, where the

departed father had already treasured the sacred dust of some that were dear to him. All the way from London Road Church to the cemetery, the streets were thronged on both sides by crowds of onlookers, whose grave looks and flowing tears told of their genuine respect and sorrow.

Arrived at the place of graves, after a prayer of mingled power and pathos by Principal Cairns, the coffin, covered with wreaths, was lowered into the narrow house by Dr. Robert Jeffrey and others who had been the life-long friends of the honoured dead, who returned from the last sad office, sorrowing most of all that the Church was poorer and their own hearts emptier because he was gone.¹

On the Sabbath following, funeral services were conducted in the London Road Church to crowded audiences, in the forenoon by Dr. Black of Wellington Church, who preached an admirable sermon on the text, "The disciple whom Jesus loved," and in the afternoon by the writer of this biographical sketch, who preached from 2 Kings ii. 11: "And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."

Dr. Black's closing words were most solemn and seasonable:—

"We shall see his face no more. Our comfort is found in the hope that he has entered on his eternal rest and reward, and that the Chief Shepherd will not cease to watch over and feed the Church which He purchased with His own blood. For the long period of fifty years this congregation has, under Dr. Jeffrey's ministry,

¹ The names of these chief mourners, in addition to Dr. R. Jeffrey and Dr. Cairns, were Revs. Dr. Taylor and Dr. Black; Robert Laidlaw, Esq.; Robert Murdoch, Esq.; Andrew S. Bryce, Esq.; William Arrol, Esq., Preses of London Road congregation.

enjoyed the richest privileges. Should not all who survive and remain very solemnly consider, at this time, what account they can give of themselves and their advantages? The voice that has long spoken to you from this pulpit is now silent in the grave. Let the counsels and warnings which it so often addressed to you, persuade you to immediate decision if you have been halting or indifferent, or invoke you to increased earnestness and zeal if you have already taken the Lord's side. The day of reckoning is at hand. Minister and people shall again meet. Will it then be discovered that he has been to you the savour of life unto life, or the savour of death unto death? If he had been permitted to send to you from his dying bed a parting message, would it not have been in words like these: 'Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless. For what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?'"

Similar services were conducted in the sister church in Caledonia Road; for it, too, was a true mourner.

Our readers have already gathered from our sketch the impression of his early piety, for, like Obadiah, he was one of those "who served the Lord from his youth." His religion, therefore, had time to grow and bring forth its ripest fruits, and to shed around him its healthful influences, both upon the Church and upon general society, commanding the involuntary respect of "those that were without." Throughout our whole narrative, his portrait has gradually been filling up before us, and we have seen intellectual force mingling with an almost womanly tenderness, and unswerving conscientiousness with self-forgetting charity. Sorrowing and suffering ones, as if by some subtle

attraction, were drawn to him for consolation, and he would have done any service or made any sacrifice for a friend.

By a sort of natural law, he rose to be a leader among his brethren, and, in Homeric phrase, to be "a king of men;" though this statement needs to be qualified in regard to his or any other man's position in the Supreme Court of his denomination. There is no such personage in the Synod as a leader such as we find in the great political parties in our Legislature, who can count on certain names as adhering to him in almost every case in which he moves. But there is a natural leadership which is acquired without seeking it, by weight of personal character, by reputation for judgment and experience, by knowledge of the class of subjects which most frequently come before Church courts, by clearness and fairness of statement and the absence of all self-seeking; and such a leader was Dr. Jeffrey, who was always listened to with respect and deference, as he deserved to be.

But we desire in these concluding sentences mainly to refer to his fifty years of devoted service as a minister of Jesus Christ, in which he found so much of his happiness, and to which he gave himself with such unqualified consecration. He began his ministry, as we have seen, with forty-six members. In ten years he gathered around him a congregation of 700 persons, who, with their children, filled the spacious house of prayer; and mainly by his own personal efforts, the debt on the building became so diminished as to be no more a burden than wings are to a bird. The material of the church was constantly changing through deaths, removals, and other causes; but during all the intervening half century, it not only retained its numerical strength, but its religious zeal and Christian usefulness. How are we to account for this? because alongside of him, in the same city, there

had been ministers who had flourished mightily for a little time, and then their attractive influence had dwindled away as fast as it had grown, and they had gone out like a meteor when many had imagined them to be a star.

I believe his own answer would have been : "The great secret of my power in the pulpit, and of my success in my ministry, was that I made the gospel and doctrine of Christ the grand central theme of my preaching." And this was the true explanation, with the addition that he preached in loving sympathy with his great theme and in personal experience of its power, and having his lips hallowed by previous prayer. Even with his well-stored mind and superior gifts, he would have failed without this. He knew the gospel to be God's power for man's salvation. It not only attracted hearers, but made converts. It was the resurrection voice by which dead souls were raised to a new and heavenly life. In handling a text, he did not, as some have done, indulge in vague generalities, from which everything that was transforming was excluded, and which a heathen philosopher might have spoken, the name of Christ being introduced, perhaps, in the last sentence of the sermon, to save their orthodoxy. But his discourses were enriched with Christ in some of His offices and relations, the subject shining through them, in every part, like light from an illuminated temple. The theme was one, and yet the aspects were so various as, in their treatment, to be inexhaustible. And, as he never wearied in speaking on this divine topic, so did his hearers never become weary in hearing. The "old, old story" was like some sweet melody which we delight to hear for the thousandth time,—

"As for some dear, delightful strain
Untired we ask and ask again ;
Ever in its melodious store
Finding a spell unfelt before."

And then the whole of this truth was made to bear in its practical influence on the heart and life, on the temptations and troubles of his people. The saying of the shrewd Scotchman from America, which we have quoted, was discriminating and true: "His sermon was full o' matter and direc'."

Dr. Jeffrey has been described by some as "a Calvinist of Calvinists." But this must have been spoken in ignorance. He was a Calvinist as Andrew Fuller was a Calvinist; standing firmly by the principle of God's sovereignty in the bestowal of His gifts where all were unworthy, but, at the same time, presenting, with equal firmness and with far greater frequency, the free gospel and its blessings to all men, and declaring that that gospel was the proclamation of God's love to the whole world; or, in the old phraseology of the Erskines, in which our friend delighted, "God's love to mankind sinners as such." If there was any model outside the Bible according to the spirit of which he unconsciously moulded his preaching, it was that of those two Secession fathers whom we have just named; whose sermons, gleaming and glowing with the love of God in Christ, carried a new life into so many dark places in Scotland where "another gospel was preached, yet not another."

If any one supposes that this honest and bold man, following generally in the old lines of doctrine, scarcely dared to look outside the boards of the Confession of Faith and the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, and was not aware, except through occasional and unwelcome reports, of the new theologies and startling negations that were lifting their heads in every direction, he would be doing him great injustice. Dr. Jeffrey kept his knowledge abreast of the thinking of his age, heard what the new teachers had to say for themselves, but his judgment was, "The

old wine is better." "Lord, to whom can we go but unto Thee?" He was well content to pillow his head and find rest where St. Augustine, and Calvin, and Knox, and Owen, and Howe, and the whole noble school of the Puritans, who have given to England its richest theology, found peace. One of the last sayings of Dr. Jeffrey to myself was, "The substitution and sacrificial death of Christ are the life and strength of my own personal religion, and they have been, and will continue to be, the life and strength of my ministry."

It is remarkable how some who have shown a temporary hesitancy or divergence from this fundamental truth, have returned to it in the hour of their soul's most pressing need. We are told of the learned and amiable Bunsen when dying, that "the full revelation made to his spirit of the pardoning love of his Saviour, and his child-like reliance on His merits, was indeed most blessed. It was most affecting to feel that all was nothing to him at that hour but the merits and love of his Saviour." "All the bridges that one builds through life fail at such a time as this, and nothing remains but the Saviour," was his declaration one day, and this was evidently the bridge upon which he was passing over the river of death.

And our brother stood equally separate, as the poles asunder, from that spurious evangelism which speaks as if forgiveness of sin were the only blessing of Christianity, is jealous of all reference to moral duties, encourages its disciples to live in a kind of paradise of privilege, and, even when there seems little appearance of their having put on the Lord Jesus in His example, to regard it as one of the worst forms of unbelief to doubt of their own salvation. It is matter for wonder, if these persons are right, how Paul should have spent so much time and space in his epistles, in illustrating and enforcing the

relative duties, and should have brought to bear upon his readers the whole might of Christian motive in urging their observance. Dr. Jeffrey believed, and taught his people to believe, in Christ as our sanctification as well as our justification, and that it was this justification which brought us into those new and friendly relations to God, and into the enjoyment of those divine helps which were necessary to sanctification. Doctrine was taught by him, not as an abstraction, but as a great moral force "constraining men to live not unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them, and that rose again." The king's daughter must not only have her raiment of needlework, but must be all glorious within. Holiness was the crowning blessing, the "bright, consummate flower of salvation." Wherever there was a man who named the name of Christ, claiming to be a branch of the living Vine, he demanded to see the fruits on the tree. To idle professors and spiritual libertines he had no words of warning too strong to address to them. "Let sinners in Zion be afraid, let fearfulness surprise the hypocrites."

In the last decade of his life, Dr. Jeffrey was conscious that his thoughts wandered back not a little to the past, for nearly all the friends of his earlier years in the ministry had gone away. And many spoke of him, when he died, as *ultimus Romanorum*, the last of a race of which such men as William Anderson, and Beattie, and Robson, and Eadie, and MacGill, and others, were honoured names. He has gone to join the others now. But, as we sigh for "the sound of the voice that is still," the divine message comes wafted to us across the great river: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

SERMONS.

I.

THE BASIS AND EXTENT OF THE BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGE.

“Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.”—1 Cor. iii. 21–23.

GOD has a proprietary right to the world He has made by His power and sustains by His providence. This right belongs to Him as the Creator of all things, visible and invisible. In the strictest sense, all things are God’s, and His claim is as indubitable as His power over all is absolute, nor is there anything that does not assert and establish His proprietary right of universal sovereignty. The sun whose light refreshes the face of nature, and covers earth with the foliage of summer and the fruit of autumn, the moon whose mellowed radiance bathes the landscape of the night in beauty, the stars that hang above us silent as if they watched the sleeping earth, the sea whose waves are ever restlessly heaving and dashing as if they were instinct with life, the forest with its murmuring moan of solitude, the lofty mountain towering to the sky and hiding its proud head among the clouds, the green earth covered with the luxuriance and the growth of spring,—are each of them laden with the proof that all things are God’s. Nor is

this right limited to things inanimate. God has indefeasible right to the world of animated being. Did not His power give life to all? Is not that power the explanation of their being? Is not the continued exercise of that power the secret of their continued life? If, then, life and the continuance of life be the gift of the God of life, and everything connected with it depend on God, from the fluttering of the moth in the sunbeam to the convulsion of states and the rise and fall of kingdoms and empires, surely we have conclusive proof that all things are God's.

Here, however, we have God's proprietary right to all things set forth in a very peculiar light. We find it made over by testamentary disposition to the believer in Christ; for, speaking to believers, the apostle asserts, "*All things are yours.*" The proprietary right of God is thus made over to the saint, and is his especial privilege. This is something well worthy our attention. The passage which contains it may well arrest us in our reading of Scripture, and is surely entitled to our serious consideration,—"*All things are yours.*"

In looking at the passage there are two things that require our attention:—I. On what does the believer's title to all things rest? II. In what does the privilege consist? and may the Lord enable us to rejoice in the blessing which is here set forth in these precious words of divine truth—" *All things are yours.*"

I. ON WHAT DOES THE BELIEVER'S TITLE TO ALL THINGS REST? It is brought before us in the last clause of the sentence in the 23rd verse: "*And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.*" The believer's right and title are founded on his relationship to Christ, and on Christ's relationship to God. It is founded on the believer's

relationship to Christ, which is a relationship by faith ; and next on Christ's relationship to God, which is a relationship by office. The one tells of the Christian man's relationship as a believer to Christ. The other tells of Christ's relationship as Mediator to God. This is the basis of the believer's privilege and blessing : " Ye are Christ's ; and Christ is God's." Notice then :—

1. *The right rests in the believer's relationship to Christ.* "*Ye are Christ's.*" This relationship is special and saving. It is not co-extensive with man, but co-extensive with faith. In other words, every believer is Christ's, and only the believer is so related to Him as that it can be said, " Ye are Christ's." He is Christ's in virtue of covenant gift and mediatorial work. He was given to Christ by the Father in the covenant of grace to be redeemed by Him, and as Mediator Christ has redeemed him by the price of His own precious blood and by the power of His grace. He has paid the price of his ransom by His death, and set him free by His grace from the guilt and dominion of sin and death. By faith in Christ the believer is savingly united to Christ's person, and becomes interested in all the blessings which have been purchased and secured by His obedience and death. Accepting Christ as his Saviour by faith, committing his soul for salvation into Christ's hands through faith, he is united to Christ by a bond which can never be broken. A saving relation to Christ is thus established, and this relation is the ground on which the believer has right and title to every blessing. He has thereby a right, a gracious right, through Christ to all. "*All things are yours ; for ye are Christ's.*"

But it is to be still further noticed that this relationship to Christ which gives the believer a gracious title to blessing is not the only ground of his privilege.

2. *This right is also founded on Christ's relationship to God.* " *And Christ is God's.*" This is a relationship of office which is œcumenical and mediatorial. The Saviour is thus presented to us in a very important light. As the Mediator, Christ was sought out and selected by God. As Mediator He was God's Servant whom He upheld—His Elect, in whom His soul delighted. His work as God's servant was the work to which God called Him, under which God sustained Him, and which when accomplished God accepted. Christ is God's ordinance for salvation, for " God hath set Him forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood." In every aspect of His character as Mediator "*Christ is God's.*" Thus related to Christ as a Saviour, the believer through Him is related to God. He partakes of the same relationship to God as Christ. If Christ be the Son of God, then through Him believers are the sons of God. "For as many as received Him, to them gave He power to be called the sons of God, even to them believing on His name." If Christ be the heir of God, then through Him believers are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. If Christ thus be God's, believers are God's also: " Ye are all the children of God by the faith of Jesus Christ ; " "*Ye are Christ's ; and Christ is God's.*"

From this statement of doctrinal truth, it is not difficult to see how God's proprietary right to all things should become the believer's privilege. To Christ as Mediator God has given all things, and "made Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body." Related to Christ by faith, believers have thus the guarantee that all things given to Christ are theirs. For their sake God has given all things to Christ. Believing in Him, all things are theirs. Just as God has given all things to Christ, because of Christ's relation-

ship to Him as Mediator, so are all things given to the believer because of his relationship to Christ as the Saviour. Hence the emphatic language of the text, "*Ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.*"

Such is the ground on which the believer's title to all things rests. The ground is sufficient and stable as the divine decree, and immutable as the foundations of the Almighty's throne. They who are Christ's have God's proprietary right to all things as their special privilege. For them in a special sense the sun shines, the wind blows, the rain falls, the earth produces. For them exists the present machinery of providence, and for them occur the varied changes and revolutions of time. While the men of the world derive what they possess from God as the Creator and bountiful Benefactor of all, the believer holds all things by a special title through Christ from God as a Father. Thus says the apostle, "*Ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's. All things are yours.*"

II. IN WHAT DOES THIS PRIVILEGE OF OUR TEXT CONSIST? "*All things are yours.*" The apostle obviously does not mean that all things are the believer's possession absolutely. All things only belong absolutely to God. He speaks only of all things relatively to God's glory and the believer's spiritual good. But that those to whom he wrote might have clear and distinct understanding of what he meant, he proceeds to specify in what that privilege consisted when he said for their comfort and consolation, "*All things are yours.*"

1. *He specifies ministers of the gospel as being theirs: "Whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas."* The Gospel ministry is thus the first thing noticed in this outline of a believer's privileges. That ministry was appointed for the use of the Church, and is designed as well as

fitted for the inbringing and the upbringing of God's believing people. Subordinate to the glory of God, this is its chief end and design. For this end is the gospel preached and the glad tidings of salvation by Christ proclaimed. Unrolling the ample commission of their office, which enjoins them to preach the gospel to every creature, ministers are to go forth and freely give of what they have freely received, that by the instrumentality of the word of the truth of the Gospel which they proclaim, through the operation and influence of the Divine Spirit, the Lord may gather to Himself a people. The ministers of the Gospel are thus God's servants, to gather into one those that are scattered abroad.

The apostle declares that himself as well as Apollos and Cephas were each and all of them a part of the privileges of the believing Corinthians, since they were Christ's, and Christ was God's. The Church in Corinth had been split up into parties, one saying, "I am of Paul; another, I of Apollos; another, I of Cephas; and another, I am of Christ." The apostle, striking at the root of all such division and dissension, which told only of carnality of spirit, says, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" Nor is this all; he declares that, in virtue of relationship to God through Christ, all the Lord's servants were instruments in the Lord's hand for blessing to His people. For all things were theirs.

Yet while many enjoy the gospel ministry, it cannot be said of all who are thus privileged, "*All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas.*" Spiritual benefit is not as wide as evangelical preaching, nor is it true that they who profit are co-extensive with the number of those who hear. This is not a matter of wonder. Many do not enter the sanctuary to seek

spiritual blessing. They come to the house of God either to exercise the intellect, or please the taste, or to criticize the preacher, or follow the custom, or while away the time. When they have heard the discourse, and perhaps pronounced upon the preacher, they have done with all the exercise of the house of God. To how many is the preaching of the gospel only like the music of a practised player on an instrument, where remembrance ceases at the close of the melody! How many love only the declaration of smooth things, and will weary under the exhibition of the more important mysteries of godliness! Give some only no trouble of conscience—give them that kind of discoursing that is speculative and philosophical, though the pulpit is no place either for speculation or philosophy—give them that kind of discoursing that will paint a scene, but point no reproof to a sin nor warning to a sinner—and all will be well. They are at ease in Zion, and they love to have it so. To such the gospel ministry is of no spiritual use. It leaves them what it finds them. Though it be faithful, it will be far from fruitful. It cannot be said to such, "*All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas.*"

This statement is emphatically true, however, of the believer in Christ. Gospel preaching to him is the means of spiritual profiting. It may be difficult to please the formalist or the hypocrite with a discourse, if they care to listen to it, and the reason is not far to seek; but seldom is it so with the child of God, if it only be the statement of evangelical truth, and set forth the Saviour before the eye of the soul. Yes, it will be found as a matter of all experience, that it is never the truly pious, the true believer, that quarrels with spiritual food, if only the spiritual food be there, for gospel preaching is ever to him the means of spiritual edification and growth in

grace. Like the bee, from even the humblest flower he can extract sweetness. He gets all the food out of gospel preaching and from the work of gospel ministers that they are fitted to impart. Every ordinance of the gospel is his, by the Spirit of God and prayer. Every privilege of the gospel is his, because it is sanctified to him and blessed. Every minister is his who sets Christ before him, because from him through grace he obtains spiritual benefit. He may not be equally benefited by all, but he obtains through God's grace blessing from all. Of him it can be said, "All things are yours"—gospel ministers are yours, for from each he receives the strength through grace of spiritual life. While others may leave the house of God as empty as they came, and lay to the account of Paul or Apollos or Cephas what is only to be accounted for by the state of their own minds and hearts, he departs with increased spiritual consolation and with quickened impulses of spiritual life. He has come for blessing, and he departs with blessing. Nor is this to be traced to the instrument, but solely to Him who makes the instrumentality effective, who fills one heart with good things, while the other is sent empty away. Faith finds in every gospel ordinance what it needs and seeks, and thus the word comes to it in demonstration of the Spirit, and with power—not as the word of man, but, as it is in truth, the word of the living God. Hence the important utterance of the apostle here before us in our text—"All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas."

Beware, let me say to you, of remarking, as did the Corinthians, on gospel ministers or elders if you wish to profit by them. And especially beware of this in the presence of youth. I know of nothing that is more injurious to them, and to all influence over them for

good. Whatever you may think or say of Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or of any gospel minister or elder, take care, if you wish their spiritual good, of saying it in the presence of the young. A word foolishly or hastily spoken, a remark of reproach foolishly or hastily made, may give a direction to thought and feeling for life. And where such a course is freely and openly followed, need it be wondered that all regard for gospel ordinances or respect for gospel ministers and elders will die out of the young mind, and that they will turn aside into the ways of sin and folly? He is a foolish parent indeed who in the presence of his child would speak lightly of any one whom God had appointed to be the instrument of imparting that spiritual knowledge on which his eternal well-being was dependent. So far from this, he ought to be earnest at the throne of grace to make it the means of blessing to the soul—of conversion, salvation, and eternal life. Only thus in regard to others as well as to themselves can the words be realized: "*All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas.*"

2. *It is affirmed that the world is theirs.* "All things are yours," says the apostle, "whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world." This may seem a paradoxical statement, and yet it is true that it is the privilege of the believer that the world is his. This cannot be understood in the ordinary sense. We find no clear and well-established connection between faith in Christ and worldly affluence, any more than between transgression and poverty. A man may be a believer in Christ and yet poor, as a man may be wealthy and yet wicked. Outward circumstances are no unfailing test of the man's spiritual state.

It cannot be denied that many of Christ's believing people are poor in as far as regards the possession of

worldly wealth. It does not follow that their poverty is a proof of their piety, though it often gives occasion for its exercise. The singularity is that, whatever be their worldly circumstances, the world is theirs. There is not only infinite wisdom and goodness in the distribution of their worldly lot, but they have with it what makes every worldly portion a blessing. God's blessing rests on all they possess. Then if they are rich, it is that they may distribute of their abundance. If they are poor, it is that by their submission to the divine will they may glorify God. Even though poor, the world is theirs. They have of the world what is good for them, and they obtain out of it all the good which by God's blessing it can give. Divine wisdom and divine love have fixed for them and given them the portion, and it gives them the blessing with it which enricheth and addeth no sorrow. They have special reason to say that the world is theirs.

It is to be remembered that God's distribution of the things of time is ever to be viewed in the bearing they may have on His people's progress in spiritual life and eternal well-being. It is this which explains all His providences to them. It is this which explains why at one time they are found in wealth, at another time in poverty—why at one time they are in health, and at another in affliction. But we have enough in the principle of explanation in the fact that God is to them a kind, considerate, and loving Father, who directs all for their safe through-bearing and eternal bliss. The world is theirs in the highest and best sense, just as an accessory in the great work of their being made meet for the inheritance of heaven, and what they enjoy is all the sweeter that it has this important office to fulfil. God's people get good out of the world, and all the good out of it it can give, as they are allowed to get of it what

is good for them. If they get but little, let them be assured that more would not be a blessing. Nay, let them believe that, little as they may have, the world is theirs.

3. *It is further affirmed that life and death are also theirs.* It may be asked, how is life more a believer's than it is the possession of any other man? His possession it truly is. Be it observed that life is something more than mere living—than the mere possession of existence. In as far as life is either rational or spiritual existence, it is solely the believer's possession. Life is only truly entitled to the name of life as it is used or improved for the great ends of being. The life of an unbeliever is a life of utter waste. "Before the discovery," says Tholück, "of sin and the need of God's favour because I was a sinner, it always seemed to me that my life had no aim. It was only after my discovery of the need of Christ and of Christ to my soul that for the first time I understood for what purpose I was living." The life of an unbelieving man is not living—it is only the record of the passages of a wasted life. It is a lost life. It is a life frittered away in vanity. It is life neither enjoyed nor improved. Living is to be learned by the end of life. Ask then, for what am I living? What is the end I have in view by my living? Put the question plainly to yourself, and run not away without an answer; for if you are not a believer in Christ, not only are you living an aimless life, but you are living without any abiding enjoyment, for it is not a life lived to purpose in view of the eternal destinies of man.

Of the believer alone can it be said that life is his. His is not a life of waste and wickedness, but a life of faith and of self-denying labour for the glory of God and the good of men. Nay, if there be anything in life that is sweet and joyous,—anything in life's friendships

and domestic enjoyments,—anything in life's work well done because done according to the will of God that gives comfort to the heart, then life is his. Nor is it difficult to see the reason. All his life is a living by the faith of the Son of God, who loved him and gave Himself for him. All the object of his life is to do or to bear His will, and to be approved and accepted of Him. And all this is at once life and comfort and joy.

And then, if life be his, so is death emphatically his. Here the believer and the unbeliever completely and eternally separate. Life in a sense may be the possession of the unbeliever, but death is in no sense his or for him. Death is the unbelieving man's sworn enemy, and the closing scene of his life only proclaims that death is to deprive him of all his heart holds dear for ever. No,—death is not his, or for him, for it bereaves him of every joy and hope and comfort of his soul, and sends him forth naked and bare upon all the terrible destinies of an eternal doom. Death, however, is the believer's friend. Death to him is the kindly messenger of heaven. It comes to him bereft of its sting, and brings him a blissful message from his Lord. It says to him, "Come up hither," and hides him in the pavilion of the upper sanctuary, safe for ever from the intrusion of every foe, and far beyond the reach of the sorrows or sufferings of time. Nor is the closing period of a good man's life generally so barren of incident as not to proclaim the truth here before us in our text that death is his. Stood ye ever by the believer's death-bed? Saw ye not the composure of his countenance, though touched by the signet ring of death? Heard ye not that cry—"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth me the victory through my Lord Jesus Christ"? Give the

worldling his wealth, his pleasures to the licentious, joy as men may while the stream of life runs smoothly on, and while all around seems calm and serene, with nothing to disturb and alarm the spirit, but bring them to a death-bed and try them there, and you will find that only can it be said of the believing man, and yet that it can be truly said of him, "*All things are yours; life and death are yours.*"

4. But finally, the apostle declares of the believer that "*things present and things to come*" are his. The apostle had already declared that the world is the believer's, but he still further affirms that "*things present*" are his. By this he obviously refers to the varied providences of God which mark the revolutions of time. He affirms that these things are his. It cannot be doubted that in all the varied changes of time God has ever in view the well-being of His people. No man ever yet wrote a history of men to purpose that did not take this as his guiding principle in reaching its philosophy. Be assured of it, that God's glory and the good of His people explain every providence of time. For this end is the rise and the fall of empires and dynasties. For this end is every movement of the complex machinery of present providence. Nay, while things present have only this in view, no less certainly is this the end "*of things yet to come.*" Everything in the future of time,—every event as yet in the unrolled volume of divine providence. It matters not what may be the character of the future,—however trying its dispensations, however terrible its convulsions,—on all must be written the good of His believing people. "*Things present and things to come are theirs, for all things are theirs.*"

The main idea, however, in "*things to come*" is referable to another scene,—the scene that spreads out before the eye of the soul in the world invisible and eternal. Some there are in these days who would wipe all the things to

come out of the pages of their creed, and would either take up with a dry materialism, or with the terrible doctrine of annihilation or destruction. It seems to me singularly strange how any being, with a mental, moral, and spiritual nature such as we possess, could ever be able to banish from his spirit the longings for immortality that ever have been in all ages distinctive of any mind that sought to penetrate the mystery of life and reach the heights of man's high destiny. Thus run the words of the poet:—

“ A solemn murmur of the soul
Tells of a world to be,
As travellers hear the billows roll
Before they reach the sea.”

If we only consult our own consciousness, it as certainly points to things to come as does the needle to the pole. Yes, there are the things to come in this sure word of God, and they present to us “the things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, the things which God hath prepared for those that love Him.” It cannot be doubted that these things are wholly and solely the believer's. They are now his in promise and prospect, and they shall yet be his in eternal possession. It is not ours to say what these things are. The Word of God has let down to us the fringes of the glory of the upper sanctuary, that His people may in some measure know and be assured of the reality. But here they have only a glimpse of the glory yet to be revealed. It is enough for them to know that the things to come tell of perfect likeness to Christ, and everlasting abiding in Christ's presence, and that is heaven to every believer. Yes, in this there is perfect purity, perfect health, perfect rest, perfect security, fulness of joy, everlasting sight of God in Christ, everlasting communion with Him, everlasting happiness and

glory. These are the things to come, and these are the believer's high and holy privilege, and they are all his, certified by divine promise, and sealed by the blood of the Saviour's sacrifice. "*The things present and the things to come are all yours, for all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.*"

Notice, then, in Conclusion, (1) *How important is the relation which secures all this to the believer's soul.* Need I say it is all secured by faith. Rise, O believer, to the right estimate of this root grace of all Christian life and service. Never forget that you are saved by faith, that you live by faith, that you stand by faith, that you walk by faith, that you endure unto the end by faith, and that you conquer by faith. Be then strong in faith, giving glory to God. Beware lest faith become feeble or decline. It would be as if the heart were to become weak and irregular in its pulsations, as if consumption seized upon the vitals of life. Ever keep in mind that we are saved not by doing, not by our passions and feelings, but by grace through faith, which hangs on Christ for all, receives all out of Him, and is thereby strong for duty and difficulty, for work and warfare, for all the obedience and trials of spiritual life. Hold fast, then, your confidence in the Lord, and hold fast by Him. Seek by prayer and by all the ordinances of grace that faith may be increased. There cannot be a more fitting prayer at the throne of grace than that presented by our Lord's disciples—"Lord, increase our faith."

(2) *Then how important is the blessing which by faith in Christ is secured.* All things are yours, because ye are Christ's. But because ye are Christ's, Christ is yours, and in Him you have the all things which your souls may require. He it is that, like a golden thread, runs through all the things which are mentioned by the apostle. What were Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas without Christ?

What were the world without Christ? What were life or death without Christ? What were things present or things to come without Christ? It is He that makes all these a blessing, for they all lead to Him, are full of Him, present Him only, recommend Him only to the believer's soul. Yes, Christ is all in all, and in having Him, O believer, ye have the "*all things!*"

(3) *But if all depend on faith in Christ, you will see the need of faith, and the need of it now.* Faith is that on which all blessing in time and in eternity depends. It alone unites the soul to Christ, and thus ensures its salvation, and without it there can be no escape from the wrath that is to come. If then faith in Christ be so essential, and if this scene of grace be the only scene where salvation is offered to sinners by faith in Christ, set before them freely in the gospel, what need for that faith now? This scene is the only scene where salvation is offered, and where salvation by Christ can be secured through faith. What a voice has all this to those who are still under condemnation, exposed to ruin because of unbelief! Be persuaded at last to have done with sin and delay. At last be constrained to lay down the weapons of rebellion at the foot of the cross. There can be no blessing till Christ be yours, and ye be Christ's. Take hold of Him, then, by the hand of faith. Are you not yet convinced that there is nothing that is really blissful or happy without Him? Do you not feel that you never can be safe for time nor happy in eternity without Him? Oh, foolish people, and unwise for both time and eternity, why stand apart from His pleading voice and bleeding love? "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Oh, take Christ by faith, and then all things will be yours. Ye will be Christ's, and in that you have all things, for "Christ is God's." Amen.

II.

SLIGHT SERVICES FOR CHRIST.

“And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.”—MATT. x. 42.

THERE is scarcely any blessing in this land more abundant than water. It is a land of springs and fountains—of rivers and lakes. The brook meandering at its own sweet will adds a charm to the landscape. Gently it winds its way to cheer some drooping flower, or minister of its treasure to the thirsty lamb, “and to the parched summer yields the delicious draught of cool refreshment.” Then look at the river that rolls along its vast volume of waters to the main. Wherever it flows, the herbage is green and the fields are fruitful. Busy life is drawn to its banks, for it at once provides for the necessary uses of a vast population, and becomes the highway of nations. By its side industry builds her ports, and on its bosom is commerce wafted to the ocean, and thereby borne to the ends of the earth. Then look at the fresh-water lake, which becomes the reservoir of the rain and the dew, that it may be made, as in the case of our own city, to distribute them in overflowing abundance to thousands, and be the means of health and comfort and refreshment to its teeming population. It is a special blessing which this city enjoys, in the copious supply which our northern lake

affords, and for my own part I scarcely ever taste anything so gratefully as a cup of cold water from its never-failing abundance.

Here in the text our blessed Lord sets before us the gift of a cup of cold water in a very peculiar light. He teaches us the great fact that the simplest and most insignificant act of kindness done to one of His disciples, and thus for His sake, is highly valued by Him, and shall not be unrequited. In ordinary circumstances there is scarcely any act that can have less about it of self-denial and self-sacrifice than the gift to any one of a cup of cold water. The water is so abundant, and the gift of it involves so little cost or care, that it is bestowed without thought of obligation, rendered and received without thought of any gratitude being due. Here, however, our Lord brings into play a principle which dignifies and ennobles the simplest acts, and gives signal value to the smallest gifts. It is not the value of the gift in itself, but the end the giver had in view, and the spirit in which he gave it. It is not the gift, but the motive which the Lord causes to stand out in broadest relief before our eye. The gift may be great in itself, and yet, in as far as the spirit and motive of the giver are concerned, may be valueless. While, on the other hand, the gift or deed may be insignificant in itself, yet when coupled with the spirit and motive may be worthy of especial cognizance and honour. Nay, more than all this! for here, withdrawing our minds from all vain and selfish motives, striking a death-blow at all self-seeking Pharisaism and hypocrisy, measuring men's acts by the high standard of genuine love to Himself, as represented in the person of a disciple, our Lord leads us particularly to note that all acts are only noble—are only worthy of honour and reward—as the motives of the actor are

unselfish and loving, and spring out of regard to Christ Himself and respect to His name and glory. Thus, if you were to place in one scale of the balance what men should reckon the noblest deed or the noblest gift with only the love of self in it, and in the other scale the most insignificant act or gift with the love of Christ, and bestowed upon a disciple for His sake, that insignificant act or gift, thus freighted with love to Him, would immeasurably outweigh the other—nay, if you take the Saviour's estimate, He reckons the one as valueless, while He tells that the other shall not lack its reward. "*And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.*"

Let us then, in the prosecution of our discourse, endeavour more fully to exhibit the principle here set before us. / These words, as they come flowing forth fresh from the lips of the Lord, exactly meet the case of all those who are apt to say, as regards the duty which they owe the Saviour, that, being able to do so little, they may be left to do nothing, and even though they do nothing they shall never be missed. While, on the other hand, it sets forth the spirit of those who are able to labour for Christ and His cause, and give, because the Lord has given them both health and means, that they may work, and give to the advancement of His gospel, and yet fail through a spirit of spiritual sloth and self-indulgence, and from the lack of self-denial and self-sacrifice either to work or give at all, or to work or give as they ought, in view of the claims and obligations which Christ has upon them; it tells that they have no love to Christ in their hearts, while thus they fail according to His will to manifest it, or that they have fallen into the deadness of spiritual decline. It asks each one

of Christ's professed disciples what he is doing or giving for Christ,—if he is faithfully occupying the sphere which Christ has assigned him; if he is improving the opportunities of usefulness with which Christ has furnished him; if even the little he can do is being done by him for the Saviour's cause and glory. It emphatically shows that Christ looks upon the least act we do in loving helpfulness to others from love to Himself with especial complacency, if it be all we can do, even though it be only a cup of water to Him as He is represented in a disciple, yet it is not overlooked by Him. — It is an act approved by Him—accepted by Him—most pleasing to Him. He that does it, "*verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.*"

Here then we learn that slight services done to any one in the name of a disciple—*i.e.* because he is a disciple of Christ—and for the sake of the Master are highly valued by Him, and shall not lose the reward. Let us notice some of the reasons why Christ puts such value on them, and promises thus to compensate them. "*And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.*"

I. OUR LORD'S STATEMENT TAKES IT FOR GRANTED THAT SLIGHT SERVICES MAY BE ALL THAT WE ARE ABLE TO GIVE.

Wherever you find the presence of true Christian faith, wherever you find a truly Christian man, there you have one who cannot remain wholly inactive in the cause of Christ—that cause which embraces both religion and benevolence. Only look how true Christian faith operates upon the heart. Through divine grace the sinner's eyes have been opened—his guilt, through Christ received by faith, has been pardoned—his soul gladdened with the

experience of the divine favour ; and the very first impulse of his spirit is to make, through love to Christ and his cause, some return to Him who has saved him, not by way of recompense, but by way of gratitude. His heart glows with love, and thus it gives forth the expression of its grateful emotion : "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits towards me ?" The believing, loving heart ever longs to express its love by service and sacrifice. In this way it tells that it truly loves the Lord.

Now it is just from a heart saved by the Lord's grace through the Saviour's atoning blood, and being sanctified by the influences of the Divine Spirit, that all the good that is done in the world proceeds. It is just to this that the Saviour, in view of the future, turned His eye for the maintenance and extension of His gospel, and for all the works of benevolence and love which the world should witness. It had been easy for Him who fed the multitudes in the wilderness, and who feeds the ravens when they cry, to have rendered His cause wholly independent of human help, and to have made the extension of His gospel to proceed through the ministration of other agencies than those He now employs. But He has made all the extension and maintenance of His cause, and all the labour that is to promote it, depend on the gifts and activities of His people—the evidence of their faith, and gratitude, and love. Nor has gospel faith been ineffective, nor the love which through grace it produces been inoperative. What was it that bore the lamp of divine truth in the earliest times from Jerusalem all over the then known world ? What in our own day has led men to penetrate the darkness of heathenism ? Nay, what has been the grand impulse to all missionary exertion since the ascension, but just this love of Christ in the heart ? Nay, what has been the

secret spring of all right-hearted benevolence and sacrifice for the well-being of our fellow-men, but just this principle of effective agency? When we look at the noble army of confessors and martyrs, of missionaries and philanthropists,—to all their works of faith, and labours of love, and patience of hope,—where is the heart in which divine love has been enkindled that does not delight in such service and sacrifice for Christ's sake, and is not thereby stimulated to gift and labour in the Saviour's cause?

But while such impulses are to be found in every Christian man's spirit, yet the most of men have not within their sphere the performance of what may be reckoned great things in the cause of the Lord. There are few that have great things, as these words are generally understood, either to do in the way of service or sacrifice for Christ. Most generally such things are removed beyond their reach. All men cannot be missionaries, or devote the whole of their time to direct work in the vineyard of the Lord. All are not blessed with temporal abundance. The most of Christian men are occupied in the business of the world, and have to engage in toil for their daily bread. Some, indeed, can command all their time, but the most of men have little more than their Sabbaths and their savings to offer to the Master. They can only give a portion of their means and shreds of their time for labour in the vineyard of the Lord. They can give no more, for they have no more to give.

While, then, we neither excuse nor palliate the covetousness nor narrowness of those who have means to give, or the sloth and self-indulgence of those who have strength and opportunity and time for labour, yet it must be plain that in the way of direct work for Christ, as also in the way of direct sacrifice, slight service with

the most of men may be all that they are able to give. But because the time may be little and the gift or the service small, are neither to be regarded? It is the doing and the giving what we can that testify our love to Christ. It is our love to Christ which leads to the doing and the giving that makes both, however slight, to be of exceeding value. Thus is it that the hour which a truly Christian teacher in a Sabbath school gives up to Christ, and in love to Him, for the advancement of His cause and glory, seeks to scatter on the youthful mind the seeds of divine truth; thus is it that the visit which the Christian instruction agent pays with the tract and the word for Christ, uttered by such in earnest desire for the well-being of souls; thus is it that the smallest gift which love to Christ in the exercise of Christian conscientiousness lays upon the altar of the Lord; thus is it that every act of Christian benevolence, nay, every genial look of kindly Christian sympathy (if this be all we can give) which the heart of love lets fall upon the distressed and the sorrowful,—is of such value in the eye of the Lord. It is not by attempting to do what the Lord the Saviour does not call on us to perform, but the taking advantage of all opportunities furnished in His providence, however slight the service they may put within our reach, that we exemplify the love we bear to Christ, and tell the presence of the Spirit of the Master. It should be ours, if we are His, to watch for occasions of usefulness, and to avail ourselves of every opportunity of doing good. We can do it by a look, we can do it by a word,—

“ I have known one word hang star-like
O’er a dreary waste of years.”

We can do it by prayer, breathing the soul of loving intercession into it. We can do it by a gift of the widow’s mite, if this be all in love to Christ we can

give, only remembering, and feeling while we remember, that what we do for others is done for Him—that though it be small it is all we have to give to others for His name and sake. “*And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.*”

II. SLIGHT SERVICES MAY YET BE IMPORTANT SERVICES IN THE SAVIOUR'S CAUSE.

There cannot seemingly be a more trivial service than a cup of cold water given to the passing traveller. So we think in this land, where springs of water and rivers abound, and where a cup of cold water can be so easily obtained. If, however, we go to the desert, as the weary traveller passes along it under the burning rays of an Eastern sun, how precious to him is the cup of cold water to allay his thirst! Nay, there have been seasons of famine when a loaf of bread was of more value than gold, and when he who brought it was the messenger of life to those who were starving with hunger and staring death in the face. It may seem a very trifling thing to pay a visit to the house of a poor disciple and leave there with him some small token of Christian kindness, yet the visit and the act may have been light and comfort to him in the hour of despondency and distress. The widow on our northern Highland coast, who lost her only son in a storm because there was no light to guide his frail bark to the natural inlet of safety by the shore, might seem to do a very slight thing when every evening thereafter at sundown she put her little lighted oil lamp in the end window of her humble abode to burn till dawn of the morning, but yet the trifling act, as some might reckon it, was the safety of many of the island fishermen in the night of the storm. Could we bring before our

eye all the results of the acts that in themselves seem but slight and insignificant, but which love to Christ has evoked, it would be found that they have formed the starting-point of influences that have told materially upon the well-being of mankind.

Look, then, at what may seem to be slight service in the cause of Christ, and you will see how important it may become. How slight in the eyes of some, and how unimportant even in the estimate of many who engage in it, may seem the work of the Sabbath school teacher, as from day to day he sows the seed of the divine word in the hearts of children. Yet the work, through divine grace, has produced the mightiest results. It has saved souls—it has added gem to gem and jewel to jewel in Christ's mediatorial crown. It has been the means of sending missionaries into foreign climes to be a blessing to the world. It is said of Trebonius that he always lifted his hat to the young people of his school as he entered the place for their instruction, for he said there might be there the mighty, and honourable, and pious of the earth. The world-famed Luther was one of the boys at that school of which Trebonius was the teacher, and amply verified the truth of his teacher's utterance. Very insignificant may be the work (in the eyes of some) of the tract distributor as such an one hands in at the door or places on the table of the dwelling the silent messenger of the gospel; but how often has his work for Christ been honoured of the Lord for the conviction of the ungodly and the profane, for their conversion to the Lord, and thus for effects which eternity alone shall be able to reveal. The work of a missionary collector may seem to some a very trifling service, yet not only is it a ministration of love for Christ and His cause, but the Master asks by such means the gifts of His people's faith and

love for the work of the gospel, that His name may be known at home, and the tidings of salvation proclaimed to the ends of the earth. It may seem a very small matter to give a visit to the poor and the neglected in their dwellings, but how often has such a visit not only fallen like a gleam of sunshine on the heart, but been made the means of rescue from disease and death! We cannot tell what may be the effect produced by slight causes, or the good which may be accomplished by slight services. One single word, one single act, may become the turning-point of destiny. Just as a spark of fire often issues in a mighty conflagration, just as a drop of water passing through the embankment ere long lets loose a mighty torrent, to carry along with it devastation and death, so is it with all human action. It may be a spring of singular blessing or of singular evil to mankind.

Just, then, because you cannot take effects as well as causes into your computation of Christian service and sacrifice, do not forget that slight service may be signally important service to the Lord's cause. Do not reckon any act you do for Christ's sake to Christ's disciple who represents Him, or any gift you may bestow, by itself, but by what through grace it may effect. Remember that the widow's mite was the greatest gift in Christ's eyes though it happened to be small, and that slight services may yet be singular blessings. It is slight acts frequently repeated, the continuous doing of little things, that accomplish, both in nature and providence as well as in grace, the mightiest results. The continual falling of the drop wears the stone. It is the continuous acts of teaching that make the scholar. Have you the cup of cold water, and have you nothing more? Then give what you have, and rejoice in giving it. Only give the love of your heart to Christ in the giving of it. That

makes the smallest gift, if you have no more to give, a great one. That makes the gift a blissful one. That makes it acceptable in the Saviour's eyes. "*Only give the cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, and verily you shall in no wise lose your reward.*"

III. SLIGHT SERVICES, IF THEY BE ALL WE CAN GIVE, ARE SUFFICIENT TO SHOW OUR LOVE TO CHRIST.

In all service and gift to Christ it is the spirit and motive that settles the true value. What we can do or give depends on how we may be placed by God in His providence. It is the spirit and the motive that give it true value in the eyes of the Master. The Saviour looks at the love of the doer or the giver rather than at the deed in itself, or the intrinsic costliness of the gift. There are deeds performed for Christ's cause, and gifts professedly laid on His altar, that are rather offerings to human pride than offerings to the Lord. Then, again, there are gifts professedly made to Him that are neither made proportionate to the means He has bestowed nor to the claims He presents, but are only the offerings of constraint and niggardliness, which He who knows the heart can never honour. Genuine love, which ever opens a Christian man's heart, will also open his hand in Christ's cause, and make him a self-denying, self-sacrificing doer in the work of the Gospel. Christian faith and love unquestionably awaken generous sympathies, and reveal themselves in actions which narrower and more worldly-minded spirits are sometimes at a loss to comprehend. Never forget, however, it is not so much the act as the disposition that gives value and acceptance in Christ's eyes to any deed or gift. Love to Himself is its keynote. Love to Himself makes it radiant with glorious light. It is love to Him and desire for His glory that

is the grand principle of all acceptable service and sacrifice. It is love to Christ, and to His cause, and to the disciples who represent Him; sympathy with Him in the grand design of His death of sacrifice, and in the work of that glorious kingdom He came to establish; the thankful, joyful, trustful, loving spirit that is ready for any work that will advance it, and for any self-denial which Christ in His providence may require in order to its stability or progress; the reflective, patient, loving heart that is ready to bear with disappointment, and wait with patience in the way of work and well-doing; the quick eye of a loving soul to mark every opportunity of doing good for the Saviour's sake,—that is what the Saviour specially looks for, and that is what makes all service, however slight, we may render, if it only be all we are able to render, an offering having an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.

And thus is it that service and sacrifice in Christ's cause come, as you will see, within the reach of all. In ordinary circumstances of God's providence there is not one who is withdrawn beyond the range of service. It may be a slight service he may be able to render, yet, slight though it be, it will be sufficient to show his love to Christ, and to obtain acceptance of the Lord. It would be a sad thing if while here he was withdrawn beyond the reach of service. How would the fountain of love and gratitude find a channel if they lacked the course of Christian well-doing? But while on this scene, there is always some service and self-sacrifice that Christian love will find laid before it, and which it will rejoice to regard for the Saviour's sake. Nay, true Christian love will be quick-sighted to find it and delighted to do it. Think of the poor man who, seeing numbers of boys uneducated and ignorant of Christ,

brought them into his shop, and, while he plied the work of a shoemaker, taught them to read the word of God and to know the way of salvation. Think of the sickly lady who, while confined to her couch, could yet employ her time in the instruction of the young. Think of the multitudes of earnest young men and young women, with the love of Christ in their hearts, who continue, not simply for a few Sabbaths while the work is a novelty, but from year to year, on the Lord's day, the instruction of the young; who, when absent, will seek after them, and make their conversion to the Lord a matter of labour and prayer. Think of the many who have consecrated part of their time to visit with the word of God the dwellings of the poor. Think, besides, how loving Christian charity has given consolation by kindly acts of Christian aid (and these slight enough) to those who were in poverty and distress. Ample is the field all around us for Christian love, for all its services, and all the sacrifices it can make. And true Christian love will make them, for it ever makes them. It will rejoice to make them. You do not need to seek about for opportunities of doing good, as if they were not lying at your hand. Quick-eyed love to Christ will very easily discover them. Avail yourselves of all opportunities of doing good to others for the Saviour's sake. If the work was not yours, it would not in providence be laid at your door; it would not be put within your reach.

“ Rise, for the day is passing,
And you lie dreaming on;
The others have buckled their armour,
And forth to the fight are gone.
A place in the ranks awaits you,
Each man has some part to play;
The past and the future are nothing
In the face of the stern to-day.”

Take up the work which in Christ's providence comes to you, and do it with a loving heart for His sake. Remember that work in the gospel cause is work done for Him; that deeds done to any one in the name of a disciple are deeds done to Him; that gifts for Christ's glory are not made to man, but gifts made to Him as the worship of a loving heart. They are the tribute of a Christian faith, and love, and gratitude, and laid on the altar of the Lord for His sake. Remember, then, that all service of loving helpfulness shall in no wise lose its reward.

IV. SLIGHT SERVICES DONE FROM LOVE TO CHRIST AND WITH A VIEW TO HIS GLORY, IF THEY ARE ALL WE ARE ABLE TO RENDER, SHALL NOT BE UNREQUITED. "*He shall in no wise lose his reward.*"

The idea of reward, as commonly understood among men, is foreign to the gospel, whose blessings are all of grace; and yet through grace there is the reward of blessing. Men are very apt to forget faithful service, even though it be rendered over a length of years. How often do you find a faithful servant dismissed from a service in which he had been a signal blessing, when he had been overtaken with age and infirmity. I have known some such cases as might have made the doers blush if they had not been impervious to shame. Far different is it with all those who, in love to Christ, are faithful in the work of service and self-sacrifice for His sake. All is written in His book, and shall be repaid in the enjoyment of abundant blessing. "*He shall in no wise lose his reward.*"

1. *Service, however slight, has its reward.* It is impossible to do good with a loving heart to Christ without getting good. Every act of kindness done in

the name of a disciple, and every work engaged in and prosecuted for His sake, and every gift conscientiously made and bestowed for the advancement of His glory, expands the heart, enlarges the sympathies, and deepens the sources of its joy. There is no such pleasure to the heart as that which proceeds from a deed of Christian benevolence and kindness, done from love to the Saviour and His cause. Besides, the heart's true pleasure is increased in the proportion that it is opened by the expanding power of true Christian love through acts of Christian kindness done for the Saviour's sake. The deed reacts in blessing on the doer. Every lesson of Christian truth which a Sabbath school teacher imparts makes more precious to him the water of life as he fills up his cup with blessing for the souls of others. Every word we utter for Christ, every deed we perform, every gift we bestow, is even now in its reactive influence a present reward.

2. *Every sacrifice for Christ, however slight, has its reward.* There is not a single gift, however small, you ever gave for Christ's cause from love to Christ (if it was all you could give) that did not come back to you in blessing. Keep in mind that such gifts, like all work for Christ, when both are rightly regarded, invigorate the principle of faith and love out of which they spring. There is no better way of strengthening a weak faith or increasing a feeble and declining love than just to put the Christian man on doing and giving. Spiritual health, like physical health, becomes feeble through the lack of exercise. There are many who are weak in faith, and low indeed in the tone of Christian love, and who live in the atmosphere of spiritual complaining, of doubts and fears because through spiritual sloth they have ceased to work for Christ, and through worldly-

mindfulness have ceased to give as they ought for the glory of the Lord. Inactivity in Christian labour, a grudging spirit leading to diminished gift for Christ's cause, ever tell of spiritual decline and the lack of spiritual comfort and progress in the divine life. Work and gift, with loving heart to Christ, ever reveal the enjoyment of spiritual health—the reward through grace of spiritual blessing.

3. *The effect of doing and giving for Christ's sake may even here have a reward.* Have you cast your bread upon the waters, or have you been able only to cast crumbs? Have you cast these crumbs because you had no bread to cast? Yet the crumbs were bread, and it is the promise that it shall return to you many days hence, when you learn that some soul, through your continued service and loving instrumentality, has been won to God, and some heart tells how it was gladdened by your ministering love in the day of its sore affliction, as it sat under the shadow of some great grief. Nay, recollect that as you scatter you increase, and that many a Christian man has had to trace to the gracious reward of Christian labour the very abundance of those providential blessings with which the Lord has enriched him. No one ever lost by what he did or gave for Christ and His gospel. But many a man has remained both temporally and spiritually poor because he had no heart to give for Christ's cause, and many more have remained spiritually feeble because they did so little—and did it with so little heart, through love to Him and for the advancement of His glory. Let spiritual sloth lead to the lack of spiritual labour, and you will ever have a declining piety and a feeble faith, and little of present reward of blessing. And this verily is its reward.

4. *There shall yet be a full reward.* At the great

day there shall be bestowed a rich and glorious reward. The six charities in the 28th chapter of Matthew's Gospel shall come into very startling prominence at the great day. While no man at the bar of Christ shall be acquitted on the ground of his works, but solely on the ground of the Saviour's righteousness, yet works of faith and labours of love in Christ's cause and for Christ's glory shall be brought forth as the evidence of genuine faith and in vindication of the Saviour's sentences of judicial righteousness. In proportion to works, though not *for* works, shall the glorious reward of the great day be. "*Verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.*"

See, then, in conclusion, from all this, what motive there is for faithful Christian service. Are ye able to do but little? Then do that little with a loving heart to Christ. Remember that the Saviour giveth men grace, and to him that hath shall be given. Some Christians complain of loneliness when they ought to complain of spiritual laziness.

"Seldom will the heart be lonely
If it seek a lonelier still;
Self-forgetting, seeking only
Emptier cups of love to fill."

Is all that you can give only the cup of cold water? Then give it with a loving heart to Christ, which longs to do more and to give more, and it shall not be forgotten. Fail in doing the little you can do, and where is the evidence of your faith and love? All salvation depends on Christ received by faith—that faith which worketh by love, and leads men to do all and give all they can for the Saviour's glory, and which, "*verily I say unto you, shall not lose its reward.*"

III.

LARGENESS OF HEART.

“And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore.”—
1 KINGS iv. 29.

THERE are certain features of character that must necessarily be present to proclaim any man a good man. Something more essentially needful to proclaim him pre-eminent in goodness and entitled to distinction among his fellow-men. Without faith in Christ—that faith which, working by love, purifieth the heart and hath the fruits of holiness—no man is entitled to be called truly good, and without that distinctive feature which is here before us in our text no one will ever reach a place of pre-eminence or obtain for himself in human hearts a monument of undying remembrance. You will find it a fact of all human experience that it is not so much those who are distinguished by intellect, by wisdom and understanding, who are in the possession of these gifts alone, that leave their mark upon the minds of men. They have a place and they exercise a power proportional to the character of that force which they represent and wield. But it is far from being either powerful or permanent. They may impress, as does the magnificent iceberg in the northern seas by the magnitude of its bulk and the beauty of its pinnacles as they

glitter in the rays of the morning sun, but the atmosphere around them is just as cold as the iceberg's freezing breath. Far greater power and influence belong to those who are distinguished by largeness of heart. The heart, after all, is the source of all effective influence upon the minds of men. Nothing so tells upon them as the love of the heart. You will find the proof of this in that grand revelation which God makes of Himself through the Lord Jesus Christ to affect the minds of guilty and fallen men. In the mission and mediation, in the sufferings and death of His only begotten and well-beloved Son, He reveals the mighty love of the Almighty's heart. All revelation of God in mercy is but the unveiling of the largeness of God's heart—of the love of God's heart. Revelation thus clearly sets before us largeness of heart as a power far more influential and effective than mere power of intellect. No wonder. For there is no power so commanding as the power of love. This is a power which the moral nature of man especially honours and owns. Men may resist the mere power of intellect, and they do. They may turn a deaf ear to the voice that deals with conscience, and they do. But how are they melted and subdued under the persuasive influence of love! Largeness of intellect, of wisdom and understanding, are valuable gifts, but they are not equal in vital force to largeness of heart. Nay, largeness of intellect, of wisdom and understanding, are not equally the gifts to all. They are special gifts of God only to a few. Largeness of heart, however, is within the reach of all. Still, when largeness of heart and largeness of intellect—in wisdom and understanding—meet in any character, they are indeed a power of the mightiest energy for good, and tell influentially upon the minds of men.

Solomon is here set before us as one to whom God

had given wisdom and understanding exceeding much, but also had given to him largeness of heart. Now, it is to this last feature in the character of Solomon that I desire to draw your attention, as I am sure that it is a feature which many lack, and the lack of which is greatly destructive of the power and comfort of spiritual life. Littleness and not largeness of heart is too much the case with the Christianity of many in the day in which we live, and hence it is but sickly and weak—it lacks power and influence to tell effectively for God. It is with too many a Christianity of speculation rather than of faith, of creed rather than of life, a Christianity of profession rather than of labour and gift in Christ's service for the good of men and the glory of God. It is in too many cases distinguished by littleness rather than by largeness of heart.

In the prosecution of our discourse on this subject—*“largeness of heart”*—we shall, I., notice in what it consists; II. How it is specially exhibited; then, III., What are its advantages. God gave to Solomon *“largeness of heart.”*

I. IN WHAT LARGENESS OF HEART CONSISTS. And here we notice—

1. *Largeness of heart tells of a heart enlarged by the power of divine love.* Until God's grace enter the heart of a sinner, it is a heart little and narrow. It is generally engrossed with self, and shrivelled up under the influence of selfishness. There is in it nothing to enlarge it—nothing to master the selfishness that directs the outgoings of its feelings and affections. I do not mean to affirm that all men are wholly selfish,—this would be to make fallen human nature even worse than it is,—I do not say that some unrenewed men may not have naturally

generous and kindly dispositions and amiable tempers ; but I do affirm that the unrenewed heart is greatly selfish, and thus a heart that is little and narrow, especially careful of the man's own comfort or worldly prosperity or advantage, only concerned that all he does may come back to him with some recompense of worldly applause or worldly good. Self generally, in one form or another, regulates his activities, and the bearing of all he does on self tells that no unconverted man can ever be in possession of "*largeness of heart*."

But mark, I pray you, what takes place in conversion. Divine grace puts God in the place of self, and the love of God in the place of the love of sinful self. It puts the whole soul under the power and influence of a new affection. The heart, formerly narrowed down by the littleness of the object—its own sinful self—around which all its concern chiefly circled, and on which its love mainly rested, is enlarged in some measure to comprehend the greatness of the object on which the heart's affections are now placed. It is enlarged and expanded by the love of Him whose presence it now retains. Nay, the more that the love of God is cherished, the more that the believing man lives within the reach of the Cross of Calvary, and there by faith realizes the love of God to his soul and the obligation under which he lies to divine love, to be its messenger and manifestation to his fellow-men, the more will his heart be expanded and enlarged, and he himself enabled joyfully to live under its power and influence. Divine love is then the spring and source of all largeness of heart. It comes out of the large heart of God through Christ's blood to purify and expand the heart of man by its gracious presence and its commanding energy. It makes the believer's heart in some measure the counterpart of the large heart of God. It conforms the

heart into which it enters to the heart out of which it springs. The more, then, that the hearts of believing men are brought by faith in contact, through Christ's blood, with the large heart of God,—with the infinite love of God's heart which flows down to them through the channel of that precious blood,—the nearer they live to God and in the enjoyment of His love, the more will they be in possession of "*largeness of heart.*"

2. *Largeness of heart tells of the heart enlarged by divine love to give obedience to the full measure of the divine will.* There can be no acceptable obedience to the divine will where there is no faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, for that is the very first step in all obedience which God can accept. Until there is faith in Christ, nothing that a sinner does can ever be acceptable to God, for only by faith does he lay down the weapons of rebellion and become loyal through grace to the King of kings. Even where there is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, there can be no comfortable obedience to the divine will where the heart of the man is cognizant of either lacking conscience or cheerfulness in the doing, for the man has failed in the spirit which God demands of all who would acceptably perform His will and obtain His blessing. It is just because of this that there is such littleness of heart amongst those who are professors of the gospel, and thus no little lack of evidence of their being alive unto God. They are so feeble-hearted to all the duty which God enjoins, and so swift in concern about all that bears upon their temporal affluence and comfort. They are so little-hearted in all that tells upon the well-being of their own souls or the souls of others, and so large-hearted in all that affects their own temporal well-being. They are so careful of the things of time, and so little alive to the things that bear upon eternity and the soul,

that all only proclaims their littleness of heart. But where there is largeness of heart—the heart enlarged by the presence and the power of divine love—it not only makes the man conscientious in the performance of all the duty which God has enjoined, but it bears the whole being in cheerfulness of spirit to obedience. It so fills the heart with love to God that there is no part of the divine will which it would wittingly leave forgotten, no single precept it would willingly set aside. The heart enlarged by divine love runs in the way of all the Lord's commandments, while it finds all Christ's yoke to be easy and His burden to be light. The man of littleness of heart may debate with himself how little he may do or how little he may give of time and work, of means and substance, for the service of Christ and the glory of his Master; but the heart enlarged by divine love only thinks how best he may render obedience, how he can most fully serve God with all his faculties and powers, how best he can devote his time and labour and means to the performance of all the divine will and to the glory of his Master. He desires to act up to the full measure of the divine will, to do all he can by divine grace in the way of holy service, to devote all he can to the Saviour's cause. He proclaims the true principle of grace within by "*his largeness of heart.*"

3. *Largeness of heart tells of a heart enlarged by divine love to embrace in affection all the Lord's people.* Where there is no grace in the heart, there is no love to God there, and no true affection to men. True love to men springs out of genuine love to God. No man can love his neighbour equitably until he loves God supremely, and there can be no genuine brotherly affection to those who are believers in Christ until there be genuine affection to Christ Himself. Where, however, the love of

Christ fills the soul, there you find in that soul, as its natural and necessary effect, the genuine love of Christian brethren—of all who are truly the Lord's believing people—His by the power of divine grace, through their faith and love. Still it cannot be denied that there are many who, in the spirit and judgment of Christian charity, may be reckoned the Lord's people, who, tried by their affection to Christian brethren, are not distinguished by "*largeness of heart.*" They cannot look over the wall of denominational distinctions, nor find much that is worthy of Christian affection beyond the pale of their own ecclesiastical communion. It is unquestionably true that we are not to think little of denominational distinctions, in as far as they are believed to be the exhibition of Scripture principles, for unless such distinctions be based on such principles, the existence of difference is a sin against Christ. Still let it be admitted that denominational distinctions are based on what is believed to be Scripture principles; it does not follow that Christian men, who may differ from us in what may be reckoned the non-essentials of the Christian faith, are not to be held to our hearts in the exercise of genuine Christian affection, and to be the objects of our Christian love. It only shows littleness of heart when such Christian affection is not felt and displayed. Largeness of heart leaps over all denominational distinctions, and finds in every Christian man the world over, who bears on him the Saviour's image, the object of esteem and love. Largeness of heart cherishes the image of Christ wherever it may find it. Be the Christian man high or low, rich or poor, the possessor of a palace or the occupant of a cottage, it is all the same. It sees in the image of Christ, which the believing man possesses, what draws forth its affection, and it is ready to fold him to

its heart of hearts. It has no sympathy with petty jealousies or prejudices, no favour for unenlightened bigotry. It has sympathy with the large heart of Christ that takes within the ample compass of its admeasurement all who are His by the bonds of faith and love. Loving the Master, it loves all His disciples, bears with their weaknesses, their frailties, and their shortcomings, and only finds in them an opening for its forbearance and patience, its tenderness and care. All who are Christ's brethren are the objects of the affection of him who is distinguished by "*largeness of heart*."

4. *Largeness of heart tells of a heart enlarged by divine love to liberality of Christian effort for the good of men and the glory of God.* There is no principle of true liberality in an unrenewed heart. Still you will find not a few in whose hearts there is no grace, who are distinguished by benevolence; but then the analysis of the motives which cause the benevolence will be found in many a case greatly to lower it, if not entirely to change its name. They perform acts of benevolence either because they seek human praise or fame, or expect their benevolence to return to them in the way of human recompense. Then you may often trace to mere impulse some of the gifts which men bestow, either because a case of need affects their feelings, or because they cannot see others without thinking of themselves as in the same circumstances of necessity and trouble, and thus in reality they are only pitying themselves while they are tendering relief. But all this benevolence, as you perceive, rises no higher than man's lower nature. Whenever you rise up into the region of the spiritual—to what bears upon the wants and sorrows of the soul—you find that the mainspring of all liberality is gone, for you have passed up and beyond the range of their interest

and concern. You may find an unconverted man give to a poor man in his poverty of external circumstances, for that kind of poverty speaks to his feelings and sympathies; but you will find but little interest in his heart for that poor man's soul poverty and sorrow, for these lie in a sphere beyond all his present experience,—they are so far away from him that concern and interest are lost by the very distance. When, however, the conversion of a sinner's soul has been effected, there is put into it that principle of divine love which makes it as much alive to the spiritual as to the temporal well-being of men. The soul that has, by divine grace, been led to concern about its own salvation, is from that moment concerned about the salvation of the souls of others. The soul that has fled to Christ for refuge, and now rejoices in the love of God, is a soul awakened to the liberality of all Christian effort, that others may taste and see that the Lord is gracious. Nay, you may estimate the amount and vigour of spiritual life in the soul of any man by his concern and earnestness, by his diligence and effort in proportion to his ability and means, that others may be blessed with salvation and life.

Now I grant that there may be life in a soul and yet there may be but littleness of heart. Littleness of heart and feeble spiritual life are most generally co-ordinate. The little heart has feeble action, and hence there is feeble effort. You do not expect vigorous activity in any work or labour when the pulses of life beat low. But take the heart enlarged by the love of God, and you have then the activity of Christian effort. You have then a heart of unselfish aims and generous sympathies, that goes to work because it loves to work for the glory of God and the good of men. Just as the sun shines because it cannot help shining, just as the fountain

leaps and dances in the sunlight, though no human eye may mark it, so does the heart enlarged by the love of God rise above all the narrow views of human selfishness and mere human recompense, and find itself ready for every work of faith and labour of love, that it may increase the measure of human well-being by the experience of divine grace, and advance the Saviour's glory by the salvation of the souls of men. This is the effect of "*largeness of heart.*"

II. HOW THIS LARGENESS OF HEART IS ESPECIALLY EXHIBITED.—And here, not to burden you with lengthened illustration, I shall confine myself to two things which especially exhibit it. Largeness of heart, or the heart enlarged by divine love, reveals and proclaims itself, first by work, and next by gift, for the advancement of the divine glory.

1. *It is especially exhibited by work.* Largeness of heart cannot come out into the light or be discovered by mere profession of the gospel. In regard to profession, all who name the name of Christ are alike. It cannot come out or be discovered by the mere regard of gospel ordinances, for in this all who are truly believing men not afflicted with the disease of backsliding are very much alike. It is in something else than mere profession or careful regard of gospel ordinances, it is in something more than these that you have the sphere in which you are able to discover a man of largeness of heart. You must turn to the sphere of Christian work. Now, if this be the sphere in which largeness of heart is discovered, there are many called Christian who cannot be known for largeness of heart. I admit that there are some who are cut off from Christian work by bodily health and infirmity, though, were they blessed with

physical ability, they would not fail in the activity of Christian labour. I admit that there are those whose circumstances in providence almost preclude them from effort, and yet I have known some in most adverse circumstances of providence who were careful of every occasion of work for Christ. Still, are there not many quite qualified for all the activity of Christian labour, who can plead no excuse either for inactivity or indolence, who yet do nothing in any sphere of effort for the good of man or the glory of God? No man ordinarily, in any of the Churches of Christ in this city, need say that he cannot find a sphere of Christian labour, with the ignorant and the godless all around him, and all lying within the reach of Christian instruction and warning. If he remain inactive, he may be sure that he is afflicted with littleness of heart. Did the love of God swell in his bosom, did he feel as he ought the love of Christ in all the power of its commanding influence, could he resist the voice that falls upon his ear: "My son, go work to-day in my vineyard," or listen to the plaintive words that wail forth from the lips of ignorance and spiritual death: "Come over and help us"? Would not such voices constrain to the activity of Christian duty? Now it is just here that largeness of heart is discovered. It fills the soul with a commanding influence which incites to the labour of Christian effort. It considers no scheme of Christian work too difficult, or its labour too arduous, or the self-denial it may require too great, if only it can make the man an instrument in the hand of God of salvation to the souls of men. It gives to Christian work the energy and perseverance of commanding principle, and that is the love of God in the heart. It is this which makes the diligent and laborious worker not to be scared away from the field by difficulties

nor overcome by trials, but steadily to pursue the end in dependence on the grace of God. It is in this sphere of work that you find the presence of the man of "*largeness of heart.*"

2. *This largeness of heart is still further exhibited by gift to Christ's cause as well as by work.* No one will give for Christ's cause either with conscientiousness or cheerfulness, who has not the love of Christ in his heart. But even where that love may exist, you will find not a few that are only distinguished by littleness of heart. If you were to measure the grace there, if it exist at all, by the gifts which they make, it is only as the mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds. They seem to act upon the principle of giving as little as they can either for the support or the extension of the gospel. They may be careful of honesty to men, but they are careless of honesty to God. They seem to think that it matters but little what they may do in the article of support and extension of the cause of Christ, because their conduct comes not under the sweep of human law or human censure. God, however, has not left those who are professedly Christian men to give as they please for the support and extension of the gospel. He has laid down definite rules for Christian conscience, and a definite law to every Christian man's heart. The law of gift to Christ's cause for the guidance of conscience is this, that each man is to give proportionately to his means, "as the Lord hath prospered him." Unless he can say that his gift is conscientiously made in proportion to his means, he is acting dishonestly to God. Then there is a law for the heart. What he has conscientiously apportioned to the Lord's cause, he is to give with cheerfulness, for "the Lord loveth a cheerful giver." If grudgingly offered, even though conscientiously made,

the gift will not be accepted. Littleness of heart may try with these rules alike for conscience and heart how little it may give. But largeness of heart—the heart enlarged by the love of God—rejoices to give to God the offering of its substance, the expression of its love. It devises liberal things, and by liberal things it is made to stand. It is not afflicted with that narrowness of spirit that is afraid of every step that would bring a new claim upon it, if only that claim respects the glory of God and human well-being. It is delighted when in providence it is furnished with an opportunity of giving for the Saviour's cause. I have known men of large-hearted liberality who rejoiced to learn a case of real need, and were never slow with their means that the need might be supplied. Cherish such a spirit. It is connected with temporal and spiritual well-being. Be sure of it,—“There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty.” Conscientious cheerful gift to God's cause in the spirit of generous love to Him distinguishes the man who is blessed with “*largeness of heart.*”

III. THE ADVANTAGES OF THIS LARGENESS OF HEART.—It tends to temporal advantage, though I lay no great stress on this. You may be aware that the spirit of selfishness is ever apt to warp a man's judgment and put it in peril. Many a man has become bankrupt, who, if he had been influenced by largeness of heart, would have been raised above grovelling aims and freed from the canker of covetousness, and might have gone in solvency to his grave. Largeness of heart secures the good-will of our fellow-men. This is not only pleasant in itself, but helpful to our well-being. Nay, remember that the reactive power of largeness of heart upon those

who are blessed by it is an especial quickening and comfort to a good man's soul.

But far greater is the advantage flowing from the influence of largeness of heart upon our spiritual well-being. It is a precious means of grace. You may remember that under the old dispensation the spiritual good of God's people is the special reason assigned by Him for His claim upon their service and means. It is the same still. Nay, what is the effect of largeness of heart in all work for God and in all gifts conscientiously and cheerfully made for God? It strengthens the very principle of love out of which it springs. It increases the love of God in the soul by every claim upon its exercise. It secures to us the highest and most gratifying of all joys—the joy of doing good. It brings us into intimate communion with the God of love. It deepens our sense of dependence, of obligation, of accountableness. It impresses us with the remembrance that we are not our own, that ourselves are Christ's redeemed property, and that our substance is to be used by us for the advancement of His glory. It represses the terrible spirit of worldliness by which many a man, even though a professing Christian, is borne downwards to perdition. It hallows all work when we have given God work for His cause, and it hallows all our means when we are enabled by it to give God His share of what God Himself has given. It will save a man from the dust of the curse that lies on all his wealth if it be not honestly applied to the purposes for which God has bestowed it. It will give a blessing to all you have. Seek largeness of heart. Itself is a blessing. It enlarges the area of our sympathy. It sublimates our affections. It quickens every spiritual feeling. It does good to the whole man, body and soul.

Then look at the advantage of this largeness of heart

in any professing Christian man upon the whole circle of his influence. Such a man is a living lesson to all who are around him of the power of the Gospel. He is a motive power of spiritual life to the whole Church of Christ. His zeal is fitted to provoke to love and good works. His tone of Christian character, of Christian activity, of Christian benevolence, gives a quickening impulse to the whole household of faith. Wherever there is grace in the soul, his spirit is catching and his example influential, and the Church of Christ rises by it into the higher activities and nobler self-denial of spiritual life. Through his largeness of spirit, the Christian society to which he belongs—nay, the whole Church of Christ—is made to reach a higher stage of spiritual attainment, a more complete consecration of herself in work and gift to the service of the Lord. Most blissful on the spirit and conduct of others is the example of the man of "*largeness of heart.*"

IN CONCLUSION. *See that you seek the blessing of this grace of "largeness of heart."* It is to be reached by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, which implants in the soul that principle of divine love which alone is able to subdue and cast out a spirit of selfishness, and enlarge it by the indwelling of the Divine Spirit—the Spirit of all grace, and faith, and love. But while the principle is thus implanted, see that it has in your hearts a commanding as well as an abiding influence. To reach "*largeness of heart,*" the commanding influence of divine love in the soul, you must live near the Cross of Christ, that you may keep the world out of your heart, and be much in the closet with God, that it may be filled with love's fulness out of the fulness of God. The flame of divine love in the soul must be cherished with constant

daily supplies of Divine grace if it is to be invigorated with all the activity and influence of spiritual life. Nay, the love must be kept in the exercise of action if the man is to be distinguished by "largeness of heart."

Specially see, if you seek to possess largeness of heart, that your work for God be on some settled plan. Some have no principle or system in their work or gifts; both are mere matters of impulse. They work while the impulse lasts. They give but as mere accident may determine their giving. Neither their work nor their gifts are of very much avail in strengthening the power of their spiritual life. Work on system. Have some special work for Christ to which you devote your energies, and which through grace you are determined to prosecute, whatever may be the difficulties you may encounter or the obstacles that seem to lie in the way of success. Let your work be matter of principle and system, if you would seek that it should tell upon your spiritual life,—if you wish through it to reach the blessing of "largeness of heart."

So also with your gifts. Let your gifts for the support of the gospel and for all the plans of missionary enterprise be matters of careful prayer and thought, that they may be conscientiously and cheerfully made. Without this you will never get quit of the ghostly form of your deceased selfishness, which will ever be ready to let its shadow fall upon you when you are called to the exercise of your privilege of giving for God. Nay, remember that this system of giving, if it is to be scripturally done, must be done by observing the Scripture law, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God has prospered him." There is to be systematic weekly consecration of our means to God, that we may rightly discharge the duty

and enjoy the privilege of gospel giving to the cause of Christ. Make then the matter of your Sabbath day's gift matter of prayerful thought, of conscience and heart. To give without this is not to reach the blessing of "largeness of heart."

And here let it be remembered that, in regard to work and gift, the exhibition of largeness of heart, the poorest and the richest are on the very same level in the eye of the Master. God measures our work not by our success, but by our faithfulness, and grants the blessing out of which all faithful work springs in largeness of heart, and that in the proportion as we seek the grace to be faithful and self-denying and unselfish in our labour. God measures not our gifts by their amount in themselves, but by the faith and love of which they are or ought to be the expression, and grants the blessing as they are conscientiously, cheerfully, and lovingly made to Him. What cares He for the silver or the gold of any man in themselves? Why, the silver and the gold are His, and they are every man's possession just as He bestows them. But He does rejoice in the silver and the gold which His people give for the advancement of His cause as the expression of their faith and obedience, of their gratitude and love. The humblest, then, of God's people may thus be distinguished by largeness of heart in labour, and the poorest by largeness of heart in gift for the good of men and the glory of God. It was because the widow's mite was the offering of self-denying love, that it had more value in Christ's eyes than the gifts of all the rich men together that were cast into the treasury.

And in one word remember that the scene for the exhibition of largeness of heart in work and gift for God will ere long have vanished, and we shall have left it

for the scene of rest and reward. Let then the glory of the cause incite you. Let the glory of the Master arouse you. Let the love of the Saviour with all its persuasive power of motive plead with you. Let the salvation of the souls of men awaken you to all that activity in Christian work and well-doing, and to all that self-denying conscientiousness and cheerfulness in Christian giving for the support and extension of Christ's gospel, which shall proclaim your possession of the blessing of "*largeness of heart.*" Amen.

IV.

RESPONSIBILITY AND INFLUENCE OF HUMAN CHARACTER AND ACTION.

“Thou putttest my feet also in the stocks, and lookest narrowly unto all my paths; Thou setttest a print upon the heels of my feet.”—JOB xiii. 27.

A PRINT upon the heels of our feet. Of course there is a print when we pass over the soil that the rain has moistened, or the snow which has covered the earth in winter with its vesture of purest white. Then the heels of our feet leave their print behind them. Nay, you may almost tell by the print which our heels have made whether we have been walking slowly or quickly, while there is no difficulty in determining the direction of our path. That is at once settled by the print left by the heels of our feet.

Though it may not be so readily discerned, often is the path of the traveller in the prairie and the forest revealed by the print made by the heels of his feet. The Red Indian, with his practised eye and quickened sense, can soon tell what has been the route taken by the friend or foe who has preceded him, and for days he will be able to follow the trail of the wild animal which he hunts with steady pursuit. Nay, there is something left in the print made by the heels of the feet, though that print be not discernible to the eye, by which the mastiff

can trace the path of his master as unerringly as if he followed immediately behind him, though he be miles away on his onward journey. There is much left behind us in the print made by the heels of our feet.

Sometimes the prints so made are very lasting. The traveller's foot has occasionally left a print behind it that has remained for years. Nay, the geologist will set before you the footprints of animals that were made centuries ago. I have seen such prints of feet upon the sandstone as date their impression back for thousands of years. The indents were most probably preserved by the moist earth falling upon them. But there they are, as fresh as if made yesterday—a link of singularly impressive association with the history of the past.

Then, think what emotion such a print is sometimes fitted to awaken. Think of the effect produced upon the imagination of a man who has long been resident upon a lonely and desert island by the discovery of the print of the heels of a man's feet where no human being had ever been beheld. Then, think again of the effect upon the imagination in the case of some terrible murder by the discovery, near the dead body, of the clearly-defined print of the heels of a man's feet. Such a print has often played an important part in the capture of the murderer, and in his being convicted of the crime. The mark of the red hand upon the pillow has seldom been more impressive than the print left by the heels of a man's feet. Nay, if you take into consideration all that may flow out of one single footprint—all the agencies it may set in motion for the discovery of him who made it, all the imaginations the sight or thought of it may awaken, all the feelings it may cause to vibrate through the hearts of men, all the consequences it may effect upon their relations and activities—there is something

awful and impressive in the printing power which God has given to the heels of our feet. "*Thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet.*"

For, be it remembered, the print set upon the heels of a man's feet is to be looked at in the light of what the man is in himself, as a being of thought, of reason and conscience. It is what he is in himself that gives a peculiar character to what he does. It is his moral nature pointing to moral law, telling of responsibility to God and accountability at His bar, that makes the print on the heels of man's feet so important. "*Thou settest a print on the heels of my feet.*" But here notice—

I. THERE IS A RESPONSIBILITY ATTACHING TO THE CHARACTER OF MEN THAT TELLS THAT GOD HAS SET A PRINT UPON THE HEELS OF OUR FEET.—By responsibility, we mean that we are under God's law, and are accountable to Him and shall give an account to Him, who shall render to every man according to his works. Furnished as we are with intelligence and moral nature, and feeling as we do that we are the subjects of moral administration, we cannot, save in opposition to reason, disclaim accountability to the great Lawgiver, or deny that there shall be a solemn scrutiny of the actions of every human being. The fact of accountability lies deep down in the human spirit. It is entwined with all the elementary sympathies of our being. The voice telling of accountability is ever sounding in the soul. Go to any man, however ignorant and degraded, and tell him that he shall give an account of himself unto God, and, though he may shrink from hearing it, you will see no startling astonishment at the communication you have made—no uprising of the instincts of his nature to deny the solemn truth. No. Conscience vibrates to the utterance of the

word you have spoken, and its vibrations are far too keen for deception. And then, how plainly does this word of God declare it! Each man for himself must give an account unto God. There is no shifting of responsibility. There is no substitute that can stand for any man before the bar of God. There, before the great white throne, must each man appear in most thorough isolation—as if alone in God's universe—as if none else but he were to be judged at the great assize that shall settle the destiny of all ages and generations of men.

Now, while we may admit all this, we are too apt to forget the extent of our responsibility. We are apt to forget that it extends to the whole man and to all the actions of human life. There are some who speak of a general providence—who seem to think that God has some general superintendence of the affairs of men, but that His providence is not particular and minute, extending to the most trivial of human actions. They forget that Scripture has declared that the very hairs of our head are numbered—that even a sparrow cannot fall to the ground but with the knowledge and by the providence of God. And so is it here. Men are apt to imagine that responsibility attaches to the great things of life and not to the trivial, to the momentous and not to the minute; that while there may be a kind of general responsibility, it can scarcely link itself to the whole of the actions, both important and indifferent, that make up the sum and substance of human life. They are apt to feel and act as if they were only sometimes within the range of responsibility—that only when something in their estimate important was to be done could responsibility attach to them,—nay, that while they might be reckoned responsible for what they did as a whole, they were scarcely to be held accountable for all the thoughts

that have passed through their minds, for all the words that ever fell from their lips, and for every action of their lives, however seemingly indifferent or trivial. They are apt, on the one hand, to forget that what is reckoned trivial is often the most important in the history of men's experience, that often trifling events, as they were held to be at the time, have been the turning-points of human life and have deeply affected men's eternal destiny. And then, on the other hand, what is plainer from the word of God than this, that God shall judge the secrets of all hearts,—that for every idle word that men speak they shall give an account unto God,—that God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil?

Keep in mind that we are accountable to God for all our thoughts and words and actions. There is not a thought that arises in your hearts that has not left its mark—that has not left the print of its presence behind it. It was the thought of a being of moral nature, whose whole thinking is under the rule of moral law, and thus for the thoughts of his heart is he responsible to the Law-giver. Nay, that thought has not uprisen in the mind and gone without producing its own impression on the moral being. It has left its indent in the character for good or evil, and the print of its presence is indelible for ever.

Nay, there is a moral history in every word we utter. While it leaves its print on our characters, and its effect and impress on all who listen to us, its wave of sound, as science seems to teach, is stereotyping it on the atmosphere in letters that tell that God requireth that which is past. Remember as you speak that every word you utter is eternal—that its influence is eternal—that its print is made and can never be erased—that, like a stone

cast into the placid lake, it produces its wave of impression, ever increasing in volume and widening in extent, until it breaks on the eternal shore. Remember that God has set a print on the words of our tongue as well as on the heels of our feet.

If there be accountability for the thoughts of our hearts as well as for the words of our lips, then we cannot doubt that it extends to the actions of our lives. Every action we perform leaves its print. As we walk, we are writing the history of our life. We are doing it by the print set upon the heels of our feet. You can trace the direction of the traveller's path over the moist earth or the sandy plain or the driven snow, for the heels of his feet have left their print behind them. So is it with the whole range of human action. Our deeds have left indelibly their print behind them. There they are. He who has passed through the experiences of the field of battle frequently bears along with him the marks of the conflict. These he shall carry with him to his grave—the scar of the sword-stroke, the record of the gunshot wound, which every eye can read. These deeds of the day of conflict have left their print upon him. But so is it with every action—with every footstep of human life. As we have been passing along the pathway, over the sands of time, we have left an eternal footprint behind us—a footprint which tells the direction we have taken, the character in which we have moved along the way—footprints far more easily read by the eye of God than the footprints made upon the sand or upon the snow, and which shall enter as elements into the adjudication of the great day of final destiny. The footprints that have been written on the rock, and remained there over thousands of years, shall at last vanish in the final conflagration, when the elements shall melt with fervent

heat, and the earth and the things that are therein shall be burnt up. But the print of our deeds shall live for ever. They have helped, through grace or through the lack of it, to fashion and form the character which we shall bear for ever. They never shall be blotted out from the eye of memory. They shall ever be beheld as memory gazes back with undimmed eye over all the history of the past. There they shall ever be the prints by which to trace and track out our moral history, as they shall have their place in reading the issues of our eternal destiny. “*Thou hast set a print upon the heels of my feet.*”

II. THERE IS A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ATTACHING TO THE CHARACTER AND CONDUCT OF CHRISTIAN MEN THAT TELLS THAT GOD HATH SET A PRINT ON THE HEELS OF OUR FEET.—It need not be said that as professedly Christian men we have a certain character which we are called upon to bear, and a certain prescribed way in which we are to walk. By faith they who are the Lord's believing people have taken Christ as their Saviour—they rest upon His atoning sacrifice—they look only to His blood and righteousness for pardon of sin, for acceptance with God, for purity of soul, for the enjoyment of the everlasting glory and blessedness of heaven. But by faith they have also taken Christ as their Lord and King. Under law to Christ, the professedly Christian man is called upon to walk in the way of the Lord's statutes. He is to run in the way of the Lord's commandments. He is not to be found in the way of sinners, but walking and rejoicing in the way of God's testimonies. In other words, the Christian man is under law to Christ, who has prescribed the way in which he is to walk, and wherever he walks he is to leave the prints of the heels of his feet as the Lord's servant behind him.

Now while the prints of the heels of a professed Christian's feet are always to be in the way in which he has been enjoined to walk, never forget that the record remains if any of them travel out of the way. There is the line along which, as professed Christians, should be the print of the heels of your feet. But what is all this? Where do the print of these footsteps point? What place is this to which the print of your heels tells you have gone, and from which you have come? What scene of forbidden pleasure, what resort of vice is this you have visited? What staggering footsteps have been there, the marks of which you have left behind you? Do these record that you have gone with the drunken, the lewd and vicious? Yet there are the print of your heels, and you are as conscious that the record is indelible as that conscience and memory hold their place in the soul. You perhaps thought, when you took those erring steps in darkness, because no eye of man was on you, because no human tongue could ever proclaim your faithlessness, your folly and sin, that all record of it was gone. But there is the print of your footsteps, the print of the heels of your feet, and you cannot by any power of finite being efface it—this dread record of the past. You may have put a very lengthened period of time between that day or night when you took these steps of evil, so that the acts of sin have almost faded out of your remembrance, but God has put a print on the heels of your feet. That print made by your heels is an eternal indent. That print God sees all along the street or path by which you reached the spot of temptation and sin. There shall yet rise from these prints of your heels in all your way (though others, it may be, trod it along with you) the frightful form of all the sin you committed and all the transgression that stained your soul. Yes, all the

actors in the scene may have gone, and silence, deep and unbroken, may have cast its covering over it, but there, in that house or room, or in that spot which only the sky o'ercanopies, are the lasting prints of the heels of your feet, which shall turn up their record at the great day of God, and which, unrepented of, shall affect your destiny for ever.

Then, on the other hand, in the remembrance of all our Christian obligations and responsibilities, it is just as true of the deeds of Christian faith and love as it is of the deeds of evil. You do not imagine that the printing power of the heels of a man's feet is confined only to the pathway of evil. There, in that back street of some large city, and up that stair to the garret in which some poor widow resides, are to be found the print of the heels of the feet of that faithful disciple, who, breathing the spirit and following the example of the Master, has not forgotten the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, while he kept himself unspotted from the world. There seems to be no record on the street or on the stair. These took no impression as the foot of benevolence trod them. But God has set a print upon the heels of the disciple's feet, and there shall come up a record out of that print which shall set forth the deeds of faith and benevolence before the eyes of men. "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these, the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me." The Lord knoweth the way which the godly man takes. His witness is in heaven, and his record is on high. Nay, the print of his deeds remain, to be at once the witness and the record on earth. Not

one single act of benevolence performed for Christ's sake, not one deed of self-denying, self-sacrificing love, not one single visit on a mission of mercy to the poor and the perishing, but has left its mark indelibly behind it. "*Thou hast set a print upon the heels of my feet.*"

But not only in regard to deeds of benevolence, but in regard to every act of obedience through grace to the divine will and observance of divine ordinance, God has set a print upon the heels of our feet. God has set this print in connection with all the parts of daily duty, and when that duty is done the print of the work remains as our witness and record in His eye. So with all our conduct and example in our families, and observance of family ordinance. The print of our conduct on our everyday life is there, and no less the print either of our neglect or of our regard of the ordinance of family religion and family prayer. Then no less with every visit to the sanctuary. You may have frequently gone along these passages, and there may have been left no visible print of the heels of your feet behind you, but the footprints of every Sabbath are there. God has noted both your presence and your absence. Nay, God has noted the meaning and intention in every footstep of the Sabbath, and there is the print of it wherever you have been. He has noted the print of every godless foot that has strayed on the Sabbath from the sanctuary—the print of every careless, unhallowed foot that ever trod the floor of the house of God—the print of every godly man's foot that enters the place of prayer. What footprints are on these passages? Nay, what footprints have been left Sabbath after Sabbath on these pulpit stairs? The print of every footstep is there before the eye of God. "*For God has set a print on the heels of our feet.*"

Think, I pray you, how impressive does the remembrance of our Christian obligations and responsibilities make all these footprints. Remember that they are the record of action—that they are the history of what has been the embodiment of the aims and desires and feelings of the heart. What is the print of the heels of our feet but only the memorial of the state of the soul within. And thus, as every action of the moral being carries moral obligation and responsibility along with it, the whole record of our conduct is invested with a solemnity which springs from the bar of God and the issues of the judgment-seat. “*God has set a print to the heels of our feet.*”

III. THERE IS A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ATTACHING TO THE INFLUENCE THAT FLOWS FORTH FROM CHRISTIAN CHARACTER AND CONDUCT WHICH TELLS THAT GOD HAS SET A PRINT TO THE HEELS OF OUR FEET.—You may be aware that no thought we entertain, nor word we speak, nor action we perform, leaves us exactly as it finds us. It has made its mark on us either of good or evil. Just as the stroke of the woodman’s axe, which has left its mark upon the tree, tells that there it has been stricken after long years have passed, so oftentimes does some deed of evil leave its mark upon the man—a scar upon him which time will not obliterate. There is the mark upon his moral nature as it had been stricken by his act of evil. “*God has thus set a print upon the heels of his feet.*”

Nay, every deed of a man’s life enters into the warp and woof of his character; it helps to mould the character which he shall bear for ever. Every act of faith and labour of love and exercise of Christian patience and hope is only tending to form that character of holiness

of which grace through faith in Christ Jesus has drawn the outline on the soul, and which shall yet be completed when the believer shall be presented spotless before God's throne with songs of exceeding joy. All is only making him meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. While, on the other hand, every deed of evil, every act of sin and vice, is only deepening into darker hues that character of ungodliness and wickedness which secures for the sinner as it prepares for him the perdition of hell. There is thus a printing power of influence in the conduct of all moral being. It leaves its mark on character. It is like the touch of the painter's brush which forms the likeness. It tends itself to form the character of which it is a development. "*Thou hast set a print to the heels of my feet.*"

But while this is true in regard to our actions as they bear upon ourselves, it is no less true in regard to the character we bear, the course of life we pursue, and the actions we perform, in their influence on our fellow-men. Every man in the great chain of being is linked in dependence on his fellow-men. Thus bound to his fellows, he is ever exerting an influence upon them for good or for evil. Follow any man, and you will find that he has left the print of his heels behind him, and well will it be if it be the footprints of a Christian man's step. Nowhere can any man go but there proceed from his character and course of life and conduct influences like sparks from the electric chain that tell for weal or for woe upon his fellow-men.

Take the faith of a truly godly man, and see how effective is his influence for good. You will find that he has left the print of his heels wherever he has been—in his home—in the more immediate circle of private friendship—in all the intercourse of business in the shop.

the market, the counting-house, the exchange. Men have felt the influence of his piety in all the transactions of ordinary life. He has been to them a witness for God. Look to him in his family, and there you will find especially the print of his heels, for how influential for God and godliness is his example! By it his children are drawn to Christ. They revere his character while he lives, and when he leaves this world by the door of death, his memory is held by them in everlasting remembrance. He has left behind him in his walk in the family, in his regard for God and His word, for His honour and law, in his observance of family religion and prayer, a motive power to piety and godliness which tells influentially on his family's eternal well-being. Look to him in the Church of Christ, and there he will be found to provoke many to love and to good works. There his observance of the ordinances of divine grace, his zeal in the cause of the gospel, his self-consecration to the advancement of the Saviour's glory, are quickening to the souls of his Christian brethren, and tend to do honour to the Saviour's name. Nay, go down to the hovels of the poor and ignorant, and them that are out of the way, and there you will find the evidence of his presence—the print of the heels of his feet on the souls he has been the means of enlightening and comforting and saving. Go where he may, the godly man ever leaves the power of his influence behind him—his character as a Christian man, his whole course of conduct and life, have special effect upon the minds of men for good. “*For God hath set a print upon the heels of his feet.*”

But then, on the other hand, so is it with the man who lacks the principle of all true godliness. He also leaves behind him the print of the heels of his feet.

The worldly irreligious influence which flows out of his character, out of his whole course of life and conduct, only lead men to cast aside all care for an earnest religion, and to live in worldliness and sin. Many a vicious way on the part of the young men of our city may be traced to the print of the heels of a licentious man's feet. Many a Sabbath-breaker's course, many a dishonest career, many a pleasure-seeker's indulgences that have begun with the theatre and ended with the tavern, may be explained by the example which age gave to youth. Many a life of iniquity, as well as carelessness about spiritual things and utter indifference about all that bears upon eternity and the soul, is traceable to the print of the heels of the feet of one whose influence only acts for evil. Terrible is the motive power, the influence of ungodly example—terrible the power of the print of the heels of a man's feet.

But it is the very same with the mere formalist in religion and the hypocrite. There is in his character and course of life and conduct what leaves a mark for evil. The presence of a mere formalist in religion is like an iceberg which chills the blood and casts on all around him the coldness of spiritual death. Think what a woe rests on him, as you look at the print of the heels of his feet upon his family, who by his example may be led to reckon all religion a pretence, and all observance of ordinance, when they do regard it, a vain show,—who by his example may be ruined eternally. And think what a woe rests on him, as you look at the print of the heels of his feet wherever he is known and where his conduct, so sadly inconsistent with his profession, is set before the eyes of men. It is not himself alone whom the formalist or hypocrite ruins. He may be the ruin of all that come within the circle of his influence. Nay,

his course may be the starting-point of influences that shall tell in succeeding generations until the end of time. You may read even then the print upon the heels of his feet.

Yes, it is a solemn truth that there is a printing power in all we are, in all our actions either for good or evil. There are footprints of love which fill the hearts of men with emotion, for they are the traces of a presence that has blessed the race—footprints which are only one long line of living light—footprints which tell of sacrificial death and salvation by it to the souls of men. All printing power of moral action on the part of men which influentially tells for good upon manhood springs out of faith's relation to Him that died that sinners might live—who has blessed men with influences for good here and with glory evermore, because on earth He has set the print of the heels of His feet.

IN CONCLUSION. 1. *Keep in mind your accountability to God for the course of life you pursue and the actions you perform.* You will yet have to give an account to God for all. The indelibility of the print of the deed at once proclaims that you are not done with it when you have done it. No, it is not done with you. It is part of your life-history. It goes with you to the bar of God. It enters as an element into the settlement of your destiny. Its print is lasting upon you in one form or another as eternity itself. For the memory of it shall never depart from you. True, at present the recollection of it may be covered up from your remembrance among the debris of other occurrences. But just as the removal of the soil brings to the view of the geologist the foot-mark indented upon the rock after thousands of years have passed, so will the quickened memory of the great

day discover it. Then will you find the print of the deed as fresh as when first it was made, and out of that print shall it spring up in the reckoning you shall have to give at God's bar, when you shall render an account of every deed done in the body, whether it be good or whether it be evil. Lay your account with a reckoning, for "*God hath set a print upon the heels of your feet.*"

2. Remember that you are responsible to God, not simply for what you are and do, but for your influence. Do not imagine that an evil course or an evil action only affects the doer, and that he is only responsible for the evil it may do himself. An evil action affects every moral being with whom the doer of it comes in contact, and he is responsible for the influence it may have upon them. If a father's example ruin a son—if the mother's example ruin a daughter—if any man's example ruin his fellow-man—can he who did the ruin plead, like Cain, before God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Will that plea avail him in the presence of God, who pronounces righteous judgment on the characters and actions of men. The blossom cannot tell what becomes of its odour, and no man can tell what becomes of his influence and example, which roll away and go far beyond the ken of his vision. No, certainly. We are responsible for the influence we exert as well as for the actions we perform. We are responsible for the influence of our conduct upon our fellow-men. "*God hath set a print upon the heels of our feet.*"

In one word, let it be ours to put down our feet in the footprints of the Master. In His footsteps, in the example He has given us, we have the royal road to heaven. The way is consecrated to us by His sufferings and His love. And that we may by the walk of Christian disciple-

ship so act as to honour His name, and be an example to our fellow-men, let us seek the aid of His Divine Spirit to lead us in all the paths of holiness, and to guide our feet into the ways of peace. It is only by faith in Him, and in dependence on His grace and strength, that we can so walk as to be accepted of Him. And let us remember in all our walk the account we have yet to render to Him who "*hath set a print upon the heels of our feet.*" Amen.

V.

GOD'S STATUTES THE BELIEVER'S SONGS.

“Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.”—
Ps. cxix. 54.

THERE is one universal language on earth, and that is the language of music—the voice of song. It needs not that the words of the singer be expressed in a tongue which the hearer can understand in order to stir the spirit into tenderness or awaken emotion. The ebb and flow of the melody pass like waves over the soul, and it heaves under their influence with a sense of sadness or of joy. The power of music is electrical. In a moment it can touch the chord of the heart's feelings, and make the whole man quiver under its lightest tones, or bend the spirit under its mystic might, like trees of the forest under the passing of a mighty wind. There are few things that have more powerful influence over emotion. It stills the cry of infancy and represses its tears, for the child is hushed to calmness by its mother's lullaby,—

“Which falls as soft as snow on the sea,
And melts in the heart as instantly.”

It comes to the spirit of age with sad yet soothing effect,—

“The mysterious keeper of the key
That opes the gates of memory ;
Oft in the wildest, simplest strain,
Men live o'er years of bliss again.”

It sways each various passion of the heart. It can awaken desire and enkindle love. It can calm the fierceness of anger. If you wish to still the troubles of the fireside, set the children on singing. It can despoil a melancholy spirit of its sadness. It has a speech in its notes of sorrow or of joy, of exultation and triumph, which, though inarticulate, is yet the universal language of the spirit, and there is no speech nor language where its voice is not heard.

Nor is the language of music—the voice of song—alone peculiar to man, though he alone especially has the ear to hear it. The voice of music is the voice of all nature. It comes to you in the sighing of the breeze—in the murmur of the brook—in the majestic monotone of the melancholy sea. The grove is vocal with the melody of early birds—with the thrush's song as varied as his plumes, with the blackbird's thrilling note, while the skylark

“ Warbles high
His trembling, thrilling ecstasy;
As, lessening from the dazzled sight,
He melts in air and liquid light.”

Even during night

“ The wakeful nightingale sings darkling,
And in shadiest covert hid, tunes her nocturnal note.”

Nay, every season has its voice of music for the ear of man, and even in winter,

“ When the dismal rain
Comes down in slanting lines,
The wind, that grand old harper, strikes
His thunder-harp of pines.”

Nor is the voice of music confined to our earth, to its hills and dales and lakes and seas. There is something more than all this for the listening ear of man to wake

within him "the hidden soul of harmony." Let him turn his eye to the wondrous worlds above him that spangle the canopy of space, and in thoughtful silence hear the mighty music of the spheres.

"In Reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice;
For ever singing, as they shine,
The hand that made us is divine."

A song tells of music married to immortal verse, and in this shape music is a power of mightiest influence. He was a man of far-reaching thought who said, "Give me the making of a nation's songs, and I will give you the making of its laws." Song is expressive of the passions and affections, such as for love, home, and fatherland, and is a motive power to man's emotional nature. As the breathing forth of religious affection and emotion, the psalm or song is only the fitting medium for expressing the divine music that grace awakens in the renewed soul. Just as men have their utterances of gladness and sorrow, of passion and patriotism, which flow forth into song and then glide into music's melodious numbers, so has the believing man his experiences and his utterances of glory and gladness, of sadness and sorrow, which are only fittingly expressed in the music of melodious verse. Hence do we find the Psalmist David, in this psalm of believing experience, declaring what the songs were which he sung to the music of his harp, and which nourished in his soul the fervour of his religious life. Addressing that God who was the spring of all his spiritual comfort and joy, he here says, "*Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.*"

Here, then, the Psalmist tells us that he was a man of song. He had naturally a soul of high poetic feeling and genius, and there are many of his psalms or songs which,

taken as mere matter of lyrical composition, and apart from all consideration of divine inspiration, are far higher in rank than any of the most famous in the classical writings either of Greece or Rome. These psalms or songs he sung to the music of his harp, for he felt like Luther, who says that music is one of the most magnificent and delightful presents which God has given to man. Let us then, in the prosecution of our discourse, see—I. What were the themes of the Psalmist's songs; II. Where he sang them; III. Why he made these themes the subject of his songs. "*Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.*"

I. WHAT WERE THE THEMES OF THE PSALMIST'S SONGS? —Addressing God as his covenant God in Christ, he says, "*Thy statutes have been my songs.*" By God's statutes the Psalmist has respect to all that God has revealed as His will in doctrine, duty, and promise, and which in the revelation gives us such marvellous manifestation of His mercy, grace, and love. God Himself was the theme of the Psalmist's song: God's glory in the salvation of men, God's love and mercy to His people, the redemption He had wrought out for them, the blessings He had conferred on them, the hopes through Christ He had warranted them to cherish, the security they had in Him of their present and eternal well-being. All this and much more was the matter of the Psalmist's meditation; it had been made by him the subject of his muse's inspiration, it had shaped itself through the aid of the Divine Spirit into those songs or psalms with which he sang the praises of the God of Israel. God and His statutes were thus the themes of the Psalmist's songs. "*Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.*"

Nor is it to be forgotten that the Psalmist's songs or

psalms, which in the matter of them ever told of God's statutes, form the grand Psalmody of the Christian Church, and will ever be found the most suitable vehicle by which the believer's soul, whether in sorrow or in joy, can be borne up to heaven. God poured the glowing utterances of poetry into David's lips, and set his soul to the music of highest religious devotion and praise. As He led him round the range of varied earthly experiences, so did He the more fit him to express them as a man of God should feel them, either in the wailing notes of sorrow or in the exultant tones of gladness and joy. It matters not, then, in what mood of mind or frame of feeling the believing man may go to the Psalms for the matter of his soul's music; he will ever find there a fitting chariot in which the soul may seat herself that she may rise to the eternal throne, and bear there the incense of her holiest praise. You may find in the hymnology of the Christian Church some songs or hymns such as the "Te Deum," the "Gloria in Excelsis," the "Dies Iræ," which fire the spirit, and even in these later days some hymns which are beautiful as the expression of Christian feeling and experience, and which may well be employed by the Church in uttering forth her praise, but there are none like the Psalms of David for Christian faith, for manly Christian feeling, for inspiring fervour, for soul-quickenings power. Sir Philip Sidney used to say that the reading of the ballad of "Chevy Chase" stirred his spirit like a war trumpet. Just so is it when some of the Psalms of David are rightly wedded to music. They stir the heart to its deepest depths, and fire it with the fervour of religious feeling, while there are others whose deep religious sentiment infixes itself in the spirit, and clasps it as with hooks of steel. The songs of the Psalmist are for all time, just because God and God's

statutes are the subject of them. "*Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.*"

II. WHERE THE PSALMIST SANG THESE SONGS.—He says, "*Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.*" This is language which may either point us to David's exile in the wilderness and other places where he had been forced to wander when banished from friends, and more especially from the house of God; or it may significantly indicate David's absence while in this world from the home of his everlasting rest, and intimate that the present scene of the believer's earthly sojourn is only a pilgrimage to heaven—the home of his eternal abiding and consummated bliss. In either case the exercise was the same. "*Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.*"

1. *David while in exile in the wilderness made God's statutes his songs.* During the period of his persecution by Saul, when he was hunted as a partridge upon the mountains, he daily solaced his spirit when far from home, and especially from the house of God, with songs of praise unto the God of Israel. See how his tongue breaks forth into song while he is in the wilderness of Judah, and felt as an exile his deprivation of the ordinances of divine grace. "O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." See how his spirit takes its flight to God in song, when it was told Saul by the men of Ziph, Doth not David hide with us? "Save me, O God, by Thy name, and judge me by Thy strength. . . . For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul." While David could not be present at the heart-stirring scenes of the temple worship, and there send

up the incense of his praise to God, yet as an exile he could sing the Lord's song in a strange land, and though men should rise against him, yet his harp could be strung full high to notes of gladness, as by its music he encouraged himself in the Lord his God. "*Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.*"

Frequently in similar circumstances has the Christian man gladdened his heart by singing the praise of God his Maker, "who giveth songs in the night." Often has the sweetest song of praise gone up from the hearts and lips of men who were in great tribulation, and whose faith thus laid hold of the strength of the divine arm, and whose hope was illumined by the light that thus shone upon them from the divine throne. Paul and Silas with their feet in the stocks prayed and gave praises to God in the gaol of Philippi, and our Lord sang a hymn with His disciples in the darkest night of His earthly history, the night in which He was betrayed. Nay, how often have the hills and dales of our own land been made vocal by the praise of our martyred forefathers in those days of darkness and blood when the minister's home was the mountain and wood, when thus the little band of Christ's faithful followers sent up their united song to heaven:—

"God is our refuge and our strength,
In straits a present aid;
Therefore, although the earth remove,
We will not be afraid."

Song has ever been the solace of the afflicted and the persecuted. "*Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.*"

2. *The language may intimate that the believing man makes God's statutes his songs during the period of his earthly pilgrimage to the mansion of eternal rest.* While

here on earth, the believer is on a pilgrimage home. His soul, which came down from above, and now by divine grace is regenerated from above, longs to return to the home whence it came, and while below is a stranger and a sojourner on the earth. The body while here is the soul's house, it is the house of her earthly pilgrimage, in which she is confined during her present sojourn. Whatever may be the providences that befall him, the believer's soul ever finds joy and comfort in making God's statutes her songs in the house of her present pilgrimage, until death shall come and set her free, ending at once her sorrow and her exile. Then, leaving behind her all that marred her beauty and mingled sorrow with her joy, she shall ascend to that heaven whence she came, and, like the early lark, singing as she ascends, she shall enter the place of her eternal abiding, there to commence her praise to Him who hath redeemed her from sin and sorrow and death, in a song that shall never know interruption nor end throughout the ages of heaven's eternal duration. Nor shall one note of that song have in it any longer the wail of sadness which so often came from the lips of the pilgrim on his journey. It shall echo forth the gladness of a heart o'erflowing with the joy of heaven's eternal bliss. God's statutes were thus the theme of the Psalmist's songs, and they are the songs of the believing soul while on earth. The exile cheers his heart with song, and he sings the songs which bear his spirit up to God. Travelling onward, and singing as he goes, he passes over the pathway of his present pilgrimage, and at last returns and comes to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon his head. He shall receive joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall for ever flee away. "*Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.*"

III. WHY THE BELIEVER MAKES GOD'S STATUTES HIS SONGS.

1. *Song is employed to express and foster loyalty, and hence the believer, like a traveller in a foreign land, makes God's statutes his songs to foster his loyalty to his chosen Saviour and King.* In almost every land you will find that there is some song, the singing of which is the expression of loyalty to the throne, and the words of the song are generally as familiar to the peasant as to the peer. While the Queen's Anthem is often sung with enthusiasm in our native land, with what glowing enthusiasm is it sung by natives of this land abroad, kindling by its fire the flame of attachment to the person of the sovereign, and knitting hearts together in love and sympathy! While far distant from the place of his birth, the untravelled heart of the emigrant ever fondly turns to it, and often in the colonies and in foreign countries, while sober and staid under the pressure of the world's cares and trials, his spirit will be stirred to unwonted excitement of emotion, as he either hears or sings the loyal lyrics of his native land.

Now in like manner the believer kindles the flame of his loyalty and devotion by making God's statutes his songs. Thus his exercise is the employment of angels. By song they elevate themselves into higher and holier love to Him who is the object of all their worship and the subject of all their praise. That which is the exercise of the angels in heaven, is the exercise of the believing man on earth. His heart glows with enthusiasm as he sings the praises of the God of Zion, and celebrates His wondrous works of providence and grace. His praise strengthens his faith, it brightens his hope, it enlivens his zeal, it stirs his affections, it quickens his whole spiritual life. The more he makes God and the wonders of His grace and love the matter of his musing meditation and the

subject of his praise, the more does his heart become attached in loyalty to that Saviour whose glory he rejoices to celebrate, and the more does he seek to magnify the riches of His grace. If you wish your hearts to be fired with love and loyalty to the Lord, give to Him the fervour of song—the melody of your daily praise. Borrow, as does the Bible, from all nature incense to send up to the throne—the perfume of your daily thanksgiving. Let yours be no dead heart nor dumb voice in the expression of your loyalty—in the celebration of the glory of your Lord and King. A time of the revival of spiritual life is ever a time of praise. Quickened hearts ever tell of praising lips. Warmth of loyal feeling ever breaks forth into song. “*Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.*”

2. *Song is employed to express and cherish patriotism, and the believer, like a traveller in a foreign country, makes God's statutes his songs, to draw forth his heart towards the country which by all his faith he professes to seek.* Men's hearts are tied by affection to the land of their birth. The love of it is implanted by God, and it is designed to exercise a very important and salutary influence. Yes, the heart of every man beats to his fatherland, and, be it where it may on the face of God's beautiful earth, it is ever full of touching associations and tender remembrances. Its hills and dales and streams become part of his being, and are deeply photographed upon the page of memory. Think how our own hearts are wedded to our native

“Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,”

and how our spirits are stirred within us as we pass many a spot of it consecrated to civil and religious liberty by the blood of patriotism or martyrdom. The love of country burns in the heart of every right-hearted man, and if any-

thing could warrant the red field of fight and the slaughter of our fellow-men, it is the defence of the liberty of our native land. Remember that liberty and religion are something far more valuable than human life. And then, never does the voice of song more stir the heart with enthusiasm than when it celebrates the struggles of the patriot, and there are none of our national melodies that are so popular, and take a deeper hold of the hearts of the people, than those which recall the battling of their sires for freedom. You remember the patriotic Jews as they sat by the rivers of Babylon and hung their tuneless harps upon the willows by the banks of the Euphrates. They could not sing the Lord's song in a foreign land as captives and exiles. And yet their hearts burst forth into song as they thought of their native land, though we hear the wailing notes of sadness in its music: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem before my chiefest joy."

And so is it with the believing man, when his heart gushes forth into song. His spirit glows with enthusiasm as he makes God's statutes his songs, for by them he is wafted away to that beautiful and sinless land of light and glory, whither every footstep of the believer is tending, which is now his by Christ's promise, and which shall yet be his in possession when he has passed over the Jordan of death from the scene of his present pilgrimage. As he sings he feels his heart grow warmer in attachment to heaven, and to all the holiness and glory and joy of the land which is yet afar off. He feels his soul more quickened in its desire to reach it, and the thought of entering on it strengthens his fainting spirit, fortifies his patience, and invigorates his flagging energies. The song cheers his heart and elevates his

affections. He feels the exercise to be blissful, as he says with David, "*Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.*"

3. *Song is employed to express and foster the love of home, and thus the believer, like a traveller in a foreign country, makes God's statutes his songs to deepen and draw forth his heart's affections to the happy home of his Father's house on high.* Home!—what a beautiful word is home! What a delightful scene is the abode of father and mother, of brothers and sisters! Home is the dwelling-place of the heart. Be it ever so humble, there is no place like home. It is the spot of tenderest associations, which exercise a magical influence over the soul. The very scenery around is fresher and more beautiful than all beside. We feel as if we had there the breath of a kindlier air and the sunshine of a happier sky. Home!—the soldier dreams of it on the field of battle; the sailor thinks of it amidst all the dashing of the storm. Home! it flushes the cheek of the exile in the far distant land, and it fills the eyes of the emigrant with tears. At the hour of evening in the Crimea, as the band of the Highlanders, who first scaled the heights of the Alma, as lately they first mounted the ramparts of Tel el Kebir, and withstood like a rock the Balaclava charge of Russian cavalry, played a simple melody of Scottish song well known to every Scotchman, the voice of conversation suddenly ceased among the troops, and many a soldier who feared not the face of the foe turned aside to wipe away a tear which the melody had started as it bore him back to the home he had left in the land of his birth. Love of home and country often so affects the wanderer from Switzerland as to cause the disease termed *maladie du pays*, or home-sickness, and often has the simple song of the *Ranz des Vaches*, which sounds so sweetly among the

mountains as you travel in the Alps, made deserters from the ranks of the soldiery when played in the hearing of the Swiss abroad. The thought of home fills the soul with the surgings of deep emotion, and never more powerfully than under the melody of song.

Thus is it that the believing man soothes his spirit and draws forth the affections of his heart by songs that bear him up to his Father's house. As he sings the songs of Zion, he is wafted away under the influence of glowing imagination to that blessed abode where all that is dear to his spirit shall burst on his enraptured gaze. He longs to see God, and there shall he behold His glory. He longs to see Christ, and there shall he see the King in His beauty. He longs to see his friends, from whom he has been sundered for a season by the hand of death, and there shall they be restored to him in a reunion indissoluble for ever. He longs for the rest and repose of home, where there shall be no more care, nor sorrow, nor sighing. He longs to be for ever free from all the vicissitudes and trials of time. As he makes God's statutes his songs, his soul is borne away to this glorious abode. He becomes all the more attracted to it, and in love with its holiness and glory. He becomes all the more inspirited to do the will of God with zeal, and to bear all the trials of time with patience. He rises above all the objects of this present scene and all the trials of time, and becomes, by the exercise of praise through the making of God's statutes his songs, all the more fitted for entering on the eternal rest. "*Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.*"

4. *Song is employed to stay and comfort under the length and weariness of the way, and thus the believer, like a traveller in a foreign country, makes God's statutes his songs to cheer him on his journey to the eternal rest.* It is

frequently the practice of the traveller on his way, when his spirits flag and his limbs become weary through fatigue, to betake himself to song. The state of his spirit has a very special effect upon the physical frame, and thus, as the mind is quickened by the melody, the traveller is made to advance with renewed strength and speed. Thus is it that often does the vine-gatherer and the reaper enliven their work with a song. When God should bring down His sore judgments on Moab, the severity of the visitation is thus graphically set forth: "And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses; I have made their vintage shouting to cease." So also the sailors sing as they rig the ship for the voyage, and the soldiers march to the notes of martial music. The worker's and the traveller's heart is cheered by song.

So is it with the believing man. The weary way of life lies before him, with its sorrows, its troubles, and its trials. He may imagine, as he sets out on his heavenward journey, that soon the longed-for home shall be reached. But, like the traveller in the Alps, who, when he reaches one peak, which seemed to be the summit as it first burst upon his view, only finds as he ascends it,

"Alps on Alps arise,
A weary waste, extended to the skies."

He sees range after range of peaks, stretching away into the far horizon, and, as he gazes (but that the end of the journey is so much the object of his heart), he might waver and turn back, so might the believer, as he looks forward on the ever-increasing difficulties and trials of human life. Yet, though discouraged by the sight of what lies before

him, the true Christian pilgrim does not cease to travel. There is difficulty before him, but there is danger and ruin if he turn aside from the way. He journeys on, and, that he may be fortified in spirit and fitted to travel, he sings the songs of his adopted land. He sends up his voice of praise to that God who gives strength to the weary, succour to the perplexed and desponding ; and, as he makes God's statutes his songs, his fainting spirit is refreshed and comforted. Thus waiting upon the Lord he renews his strength—he mounts up on wings as eagles—he runs and is not weary—he walks and is not faint. The minstrelsy of Zion's music is strength to his heart. It inspires his soul with patience, with fervour, and with zeal. He is strengthened for the journey of life by making God's statutes his songs in the house of his pilgrimage.

5. *Song is employed to embolden the spirit, and so the believer, like a traveller in a foreign country, makes God's statutes his songs to inspire him with courage to meet all the spiritual enemies and dangers on his way to heaven.* There is a heart-invigorating power in the music of martial song. The Marseillaise hymn of the French Revolution of the last century had a more powerful effect upon the minds of the French people in providing battalions for the field than any Government conscription, and was the secret of the strength of many armies. The songs of the Greek lyrical poets fired the people with enthusiasm, and accounts for the heroic deeds of Marathon and Salamis. Luther's hymn (*"Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott"*), "A strong tower is our God," is like the war trumpet's voice to the German soldier on the field of death. You may remember, in the time of the Franco-German War, the startling effect it produced on the people within the walls of Metz, as it was sung one Sabbath evening by the 150,000 German soldiery that lay

around that beleaguered city. Striking is the effect of song on true Christian faith. Often has it stayed the heart of the martyr in his prison-house, and fired his spirit with the heroic fortitude of endurance on the scaffold and at the stake. The song of praise to God kindles the soul with courage to fight the good fight of faith, and, through grace, to defy the power of every spiritual foe. The heart of the godly man rises up to God in praise, and his song declares his confidence, as in the words of the Psalmist he pours forth the melody of its music. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." He sings, and, as God's statutes are his songs, so does his soul become, by the exercise, invigorated for the contest, as it realizes the presence of God and the help of His all-sufficient aid. Let the Christian man, in faith, and with joy in God as his covenant God in Christ, sing forth aloud the glory of His name, and his heart will not quail before all the power of the enemy. He may, as certainly as did Cromwell at the battle of Dunbar, shout forth this war-note in the face of the foe :

"Let God arise, and scattered
Let all His en'mies be,"

and with far more assurance of victory in the fight. Well may he make God's statutes his songs in the house of his pilgrimage.

6. *Finally, song is employed to welcome home, and the believer, like a traveller in a foreign country, makes God's statutes his songs in the view of leaving this world, the place of his present pilgrimage, for his eternal abode.* The sight of home near, fills the heart with joy, and often has this joy gushed forth in the gladness of song. Think of the traveller in a far distant land who has long been

absent from home. Can you wonder, as when first the sight of it bursts upon his view, that his heart should overflow through glad emotion into singing? When at the solemn feasts the tribes of Israel went up to Jerusalem, as they reached the height from which the holy city, with its high towers and palaces and bulwarks, could first be beheld, the whole band of travelling worshippers gave forth the expression of their heart's feelings in one united enthusiastic song of praise: "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge." Their hearts were filled with joy and their mouths with praise, as they beheld the sacred spot on which rested their tenderest affections.

And so not unfrequently is it with the believing man. As from this side of the Jordan of death he gazes on the heavenly country, ere long to be his eternal possession; as from the heights of the Beulah of promise he beholds the land that is not now afar off; as by the eye of faith he sees the new Jerusalem, the city of the living God, in all its architecture of living light, with its walls of jasper, and gates of pearl, and streets of pure gold, which now he is about to enter,—can you wonder that his heart should burst forth into a song of praise. By the door of death he enters on all the glory of immortal life. With the words of praise on his lips, he passes through all the gloom of the valley of the shadow of death, to issue forth into all the brightness of his eternal home. He leaves the songs of earth—the songs which he sings in the house of his present pilgrimage—for the song of the redeemed around the throne, which shall fill all heaven with the voices of its innumerable worshippers for ever and ever.

Now, in conclusion : If the consideration of this subject is to have any practical effect, see that your daily life be more enriched and gladdened with the exercise of praise. The Christianity of the day too much lacks, in the case of individual Christians, the exercise of praise. There are those who can sing the songs of fatherland, and other songs besides, some of which were as well unsung, that never sing the praises of God in the family, even if they meet there for the worship of Him to whom belongeth praise. Give yourselves and your children the benefit of praise in your family worship, and God the glory of it. There was a time in our land when at eventide there arose from every hamlet the voice of psalms, the simple song of praise. It were well for our country if such were the practice still. In dwellings of the righteous is heard the melody of praise. Praise ye the Lord with joyful lips. Let the worship of the family be the worship of its united and earnest praise.

Praise God in your lives. Let the life of each be a beautiful psalm of praise. Let the two strings of profession and practice sound forth in one chord of symphonious music. Let there be no dissonance in their harmony. Let God have your lives, and your lips besides. Commence every morning, like the lark, by rising up in praise to heaven. Close every day, like the nightingale, with a song of praise to God. Rejoice to sing God's praise. Bring the praise of God into the warp and woof of your daily life. Be happy, praising Christian men and women. "Rejoice in the Lord always : and again I say, Rejoice." Remember that a heart given to Christ by faith insures the possession of spiritual gladness. Be ready to praise God as well under the cloud as under the sunshine—as well in adversity as in prosperous times. Nay, it becomes you to recommend

your religion to others by your spiritual gladness. That you may be ready to give such a testimony to its truth and power, seek that ye may be able to say of Christ, "Whom having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see Him not, yet, believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." It is out of Christ received by faith that we have the upspringing of all true and abiding spiritual joy. Seek to trust Christ with all your heart, and both with heart and lip you will praise Him.

"How sweetly singeth
The soul that clingeth,
My loving Lord, to Thee!"

Truly can such an one say, "*Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.*"

VI.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD COMETH NOT WITH OBSERVATION.

“The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.”—

LUKE xvii. 20.

THE mightiest agencies ever produce effects which are silently accomplished. There is no noise in the morning of spring when the grass of the field and the trees of the forest clothe themselves with beauty in their robes of green. There is no noise on earth when the snow falls or when the seed fructifies that is yet to grow into all the richness of harvest, and become food for the millions that inhabit the surface of our globe. There is no noise when the sun rises in the east and wakes the world from slumber. Gently and noiselessly is the dew distilled beneath the stars, and as gently and noiselessly does it depart before the breath of the morning. The mighty power that bears along the worlds above us in their orbits through the immensity of space makes no noise as it speeds them in their rapidity of flight. Who ever saw with the eye or heard with the ear the exertions of that mighty astronomic force which every moment holds this vast universe together? ~~Nay~~, there are many who might be apt to think light a very tame and feeble agency because it is noiseless. An earthquake seems to be charged with

mightier power. It thunders through the solid foundations of nature, and rocks a whole continent. In a moment the works of man are shattered and cities levelled with the ground. And yet, let the light of day cease, and there would be the reign of universal death. The vegetable world would be destroyed, the vital power of the whole animal world would be extinguished. The earth would be frozen to its centre, and the earthquake itself would cease. Such is light, that comes to us so noiselessly and gently that it would not wake an infant from its sleep, and yet every morning rescues a world from death. Take another view of the matter. Many might be apt to imagine that the pestilence that treads with noiseless feet would leave but little track of desolation behind it. A hurricane seems to be far more destructive. It sweeps over the face of the earth, carrying devastation in its train. And yet, what are its ravages to those of the pestilence that walketh in darkness and the destruction that wasteth at noonday? See how it steals unseen and noiselessly over a city full of men, and in a night hundreds of hearts pause with it suddenly, to beat no more. Death's icy hand hath frozen with a touch the fountain of their life, and they are gone into the waveless sea of silence. Nor is it alone true of all the mightiest agencies of nature that they produce effects which are noiselessly accomplished. It is no less true of much besides. All things most fair and holiest in nature noiseless weave their threads of being. Angels visit earth in silence, and, silent as the dreams of sleepers, retreat. Human thought makes pilgrimages wide and silent through universal space, scanning in its ascent the heights of God's throne, and descending to the deepest depths of hell. Nay, the very wheel of providence, so high and vast, so laden with the destiny of worlds, rolls

ever onward silent and unheard. Now all this only reveals the special distinctive characteristic of divine action and manifestation. Behind mere show, the outward noise and stir of the world, God always conceals His hand of power and control and the law by which He rules. In all His gracious acting He is not so much in the whirlwind and the storm as in the still, small voice. His mightiest changes are ever accomplished invisibly, with all the calmness and noiselessness of mighty power. Noise tells of effort needed to produce the effect, and often where there is much noise very slightly marked effect is produced. The power that is mighty moves with all the ease of invincible energy. Thus is it that alike in nature and in providence the agency which God employs to effect the mightiest changes "*cometh not with observation.*"

But as in nature and providence, so in grace. The kingdom of God in nature "*cometh not with observation,*" or, as it is in the margin, with any outward show. The only observation or outward show it gives men to mark are its mighty effects noiselessly accomplished by divine agency. The kingdom of God in providence "*cometh not with observation*" or outward show. What is matter of observation or outward show are only the effects of that providential rule which traces itself directly to the mighty touch and impulse of God's invisible hand. The might of kings, the tread of armies, the rise and fall of empires and dynasties, are only the evidences of that rule displayed, and are only the accomplishment of His mighty and all-pervading will. It need not thus astonish us to read these words of our text, which come to us so impressively from the lips of the Lord Himself, and which form the subject of our present

discourse. “*And when He was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.*”

Let us then look at this statement of our Lord to which our attention is here directed. “*The kingdom of God*” is a phrase not infrequently used in Scripture. It most generally brings before us either the kingdom of grace in the heart or the kingdom of glory for which the kingdom of grace is the preparation. Both of these views are inseparably connected. The one respects earth. The other respects heaven. It is, however, to the first of these, the kingdom of grace in the heart—that kingdom of which it is said in the next verse, “the kingdom of God is within you,” that kingdom which is begun in the believer’s heart on earth—to which the text especially points. That kingdom commences in the day of effectual calling, when, by divine grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the sinner is translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. Concerning that kingdom of God the Saviour says, “*The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.*”

Looking, then, at this kingdom of God as the kingdom of grace on earth, we remark—

I. THE FOUNDATION OF GOD’S KINGDOM OF GRACE WAS LAID ON EARTH WITHOUT OBSERVATION.—It came without any outward show to attract the eyes of men. That foundation is the incarnation and sacrificial work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the whole of which presented but little to attract the eyes of men. While on Christ’s appearance and work in the flesh the whole destiny of the world was dependent, yet there was nothing in His advent distinguished by imposing external demonstrations.

While that event was to link itself to the whole race, and affect the destinies of unborn generations,—while it was the grand central event of providence, around which all God's purposes and plans revolved, and from which all received their full significance,—while it was designed to turn the whole tide of human affairs, and pass on throughout all time in ever-widening circles of power and influence, till the whole earth should be filled with the glory of the Lord, yet there was nothing about it of that earthly show and grandeur which the minds of men count impressive and imposing. Nature moved on with her unvarying sequences, though the Lord of nature was about to be revealed in flesh. There was nothing in the heavens or the earth hung forth as the sign of His coming. No, nature was silent and voiceless, and the nations, sunk in the darkness of the midnight of the deepest spiritual death, had no eye for the presence of one who came “not with observation.”

The hour at last arrived for the great event of all time, of all providence,—the advent of God manifest in flesh. And how singularly stripped do we find the Nativity of all the glare of mere external pomp and show! There are no clarion tongues of fame—such as the world calls fame—to publish it. The kings of the earth are not there to do homage to the King of kings and the Lord of lords as He descends upon the theatre of time. For him there is no infant bed in halls of royalty, with nobles ministering at the couch and proclaiming the appearance of God in human form to the nations. No, the Saviour comes into the world in a humble village at the dead of night. He is born in a stable and laid in a manger, as there was no room in the inn. Could any event be more thoroughly stripped of all

that external show which so readily attracts the eyes of men?—

“The heavens were not commanded to prepare
A gorgeous canopy of golden air,
Nor stooped their lamps the enthronèd fires on high.
A single silent star
Came wandering from afar,
Gliding, unchecked and calm, along the liquid sky.”

Without one single note of noisy announcement, without one single element of merely external pomp and grandeur, the Saviour is revealed among men in garments of flesh, while His birth is proclaimed to the few humble shepherds as they “watched their flocks on Bethlehem’s plains by night.”

No; when the Saviour appeared, the earth, drowsy with sin and with eyes closed to all the glory of spiritual beauty and purity and love, could not discern the event for which every believing heart had sighed from the fall, and on which all the hopes of faith lay enshrined. He who came to save and to bless mankind, came without any imposing demonstrations. External pomp and grandeur were an unmeet proclamation of the presence of Him who was the embodiment of grace and truth—the two grand spiritual powers which, by His death, were to become resistless in their might. Men are apt to imagine that manifestations of the great God should be such as to overpower the minds of men, that if He should come visibly to earth the heavens should bow and the earth should tremble. But it depends upon His errand, and the errand of mercy must be heralded and accompanied with all the calmness of spiritual power, with all the gentleness of love. From its very nature Christ’s advent was without observation.

And then go with Him throughout His whole life as

He fulfilled His mission to earth, and you will find nothing about Him of mere outward show. He was a root out of a dry ground. He had no form nor comeliness. When men saw Him, they saw no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. Was He not a weary wanderer—a houseless, homeless traveller—watched evermore by spies and informers, and carrying in His bosom a venal traitor? He who had within Him a boundless ocean of wisdom, why did He not by human voice occupy the high seats of learning, or the seat of awful justice, to rule with equity the people? He who was the mighty God, why was He not placed on the seat of universal empire? Notwithstanding all His spiritual majesty and might and mercy, where was there anything about Him that by external pomp or display could draw the wondering eyes of men? And then go with Him to the last scenes of His life below. Behold Him buffeted, spit upon, crowned with thorns, His blood sold for money, justice, the common right of man, refused Him,—nay, in the face of justice, crucified on a tree on which a murderer should have hung. Where was there in all these external elements of pain and shame and curse, what could render the sufferer and His cause attractive? Why, all was only fitted to repel the world, whose heart rejoiced in imposing demonstrations of external grandeur, and ever shrunk from lowliness and poverty, from humiliation and suffering and death. Though the death of Christ upon the cross be an event whose spiritual glory is infinite and eternal, filling all ages and all worlds; though it be an event which was the redemption of His people, which laid the foundation of God's kingdom of grace on earth, and shall people heaven with the eternal monuments of God's mercy and love; though it shall make heaven resound throughout eternity with the voice of the saints' unbroken song of

praise, and shed the light of undying splendour around God's throne, yet still it is emphatically true of it as the foundation of God's kingdom of grace on earth: "*The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.*"

II. THE FOUNDATION OF GOD'S KINGDOM OF GRACE IS LAID IN THE SINNER'S HEART WITHOUT OBSERVATION.—On earth there is no sound when souls are born to God. You are well aware that while the great spiritual change which takes place upon a man's soul in the day of effectual calling is followed by effects that are most manifest in the character and life, yet the change itself is noiselessly effected, it comes without any outward show, without observation. Just as no eye saw Christ arise from the dead, when He burst the bands of death, and rose victorious over death and the grave, though the eyes of men beheld Him after He had arisen, so no eye may see the soul of man arising from the tomb of spiritual death, when by divine grace and by the mighty power of the Divine Spirit it is silently and noiselessly quickened into life, though the eye of man will soon be able to discern that the mighty change has taken place upon the whole framework and feelings of the spiritual man. No, God in all His work of life moves noiselessly, without anything to attract by mere outward show. Look at the acorn which is borne away from the oak in autumn on the lap of some wandering wind. It falls down into the soil and takes root noiselessly. Without anything to attract mere outward observation, it is quickened into life in the morning of spring. So is it with the good seed of the Word as it falls upon the sinner's soul. On earth there is no clanging demonstration of mere outward show, when, by the divine word and by the agency of the Divine Spirit, a soul is born to God. Though perhaps at the time

it may be the greatest event occurring in the universe,—one around which all the interest of heaven concentrates, which fills the angelic hosts with joy, yet it occurs as noiselessly, without aught of outward show to arrest the minds of men, as does the falling of the dew upon the tender herb. The divine power of grace exerts itself upon the human soul with all the ease of invincible energy, but there is no sound to tell its operation. There, in the sanctuary, is the word of God proclaimed, the message of the divine mercy revealing Christ and the riches of His grace and love is announced. You may mark the presence of hundreds of listeners, yet you mark not how that word has gone like an arrow to the conscience of some sinner, has stirred his soul to its very depths, and has become to him the word of salvation and life. You have not been able to rest your eye on the operation of that invincible agency of the Divine Spirit which has quickened the dead soul, changed the whole current of its energies and activities, and brought the sinner from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. The man, to all human eyes, leaves the sanctuary the same as he entered it; yet he has been the subject of a great change which affects his eternal destinies, which has bound his soul by ties enduring to the divine throne, and taken captive his whole spiritual being. The still, small voice of love and mercy has reached him. Gently and irresistibly it has penetrated the heart, for ever there to have its abiding, and to transform it into the glory of God's own image of purity and love. It is possible that you may see the attitude, and hear, as they are uttered, the words of prayer. But can you discern the presence and operation of that unseen influence which sends the sunlight of divine love over the whole soul of the petitioner, and fills it with the joy which a sense of God's love can alone impart? You cannot discern the flash of

fire that passes through the electric cable which binds two continents together, though its messages may fill a nation's heart with joy. As little can you put your finger on that divine influence which, like the wind, bloweth where it listeth. You may hear the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth. No, though the power that works from the centre ever reaches and is seen at the circumference, though the power that touches the heart is seen to tell upon the whole man, yet itself is exerted without any outward show, without observation. It works, and the world has no eye to see it. A soul, by the power of divine grace, lays down the weapons of its rebellion at the foot of the Cross, accepts Christ as a Saviour, and passes from death unto life, and all takes place with a noiselessness that ever marks God's mightiest operations. Without observation God accomplishes His designs of grace. Thus is it that there are often spiritual events occurring around us, and that, too, far beyond the ken of human vision, vastly more momentous than can be witnessed though we beheld nations on the field of battle, and saw the fall of dynasties and empires. What are all such events, only of passing and earthly concern, when compared with the change which takes place upon a soul on the day when, by divine grace, it is born to God? The rise and growth of empires have a mere transitory importance and interest, much as they may engage the minds of men. They are a mere speck on the horizon of illimitable duration. They shall drop out of all thought, or perhaps out of all remembrance, in a world unseen. But the conversion of a soul, the laying of the foundation of the kingdom of God's grace in the human heart, is an event of eternal interest, of far more importance in its issues than the rise and fall of kingdoms and empires. Yet when the foundation of that

kingdom is laid in the human soul, it is emphatically true of it—" *The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.*"

III. THE KINGDOM OF GOD'S GRACE IS ADVANCED IN THE WORLD WITHOUT OBSERVATION.

There is here a very marked contrast between the extension and progress of God's kingdom of grace and mere earthly kingdoms. The kingdoms of this world are most generally extended by force, and have arisen by the power of external conquest. In our own day we have seen how a nation of Europe has risen, by a single campaign, into the importance of an empire by the force of arms and by the conquest of the battlefield. It has assumed a position which shall tell materially upon the liberties of men. But then, the din of the battlefield was heard over the world, and the stroke of the sword and the shot of the cannon fell upon the ear of nations. Here, as in all material changes, every battlefield of the warrior was with confused noise, as well as with garments rolled in blood. But far different is it with the extension and increase of God's kingdom of grace among men. It is not by force, by external coercion, that God's kingdom of grace is advanced. External force may make a hypocrite, but it can never make a Christian. External force may lead men to assume the name of Christ, but it can never reach a conscience nor subdue a single soul to God. External force is not the key which unlocks the door of the heart. It is not the agency, it has nought to do with the instrumentality, by which men are won to Christ and to the obedience of faith. Verily, no. It is the utterance of divine truth, the message of divine mercy, the simple story of the Saviour's love and sufferings and death, which is the mighty instrumentality, through the

power of the Divine Spirit, to convert a sinner's soul, to remodel and reconstruct society, that is fitted to change and modify it for ever. And then be it observed that it accomplishes all its mighty effects by the silent yet steady operation of influences which attract no observant attention from the minds of men. The leaven of divine truth is cast into the mass of the world of men. With all the noiselessness of power it carries on its operation until it leavens the whole. There is nothing in the simple proclamation of the gospel that is fitted to attract human observation. To many it appears only the foolishness of preaching, a very feeble instrumentality, though it be mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. Yet silently and powerfully it makes its way, permeating the minds of men, efficaciously reaching the depths of public sentiment and feeling, controlling human action, and resistlessly accomplishing the mightiest revolution in the hearts of individuals and families, and bringing about a more perfect form of human civilization than the world has ever witnessed. And onward shall this instrumentality proceed, until all the ends of the earth, through divine grace, have been subdued by it, and men shall everywhere acknowledge Christ to be their only Sovereign Lord; until the kingdoms of force shall have fallen down prostrate before the kingdom of grace; until it has made the nations of the earth one grand and holy brotherhood, linked together by the ties of gospel love and peace; until truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven; until God shall behold from the heights of heaven's sanctuary a regenerated and rejoicing world.

And then, while this kingdom of grace is extended and increased by an instrumentality that attracts no observation by its outward show, this is not the less true of

those who have been appointed by the Saviour's ordination to promote it. Who could be more humble than the twelve poor fishermen who went forth under the wing of the Saviour's commission to the evangelization of a world? What seemingly more feeble or unmeet, if you were to take the judgment of men? What could there be in their testimony concerning Christ to produce any very mighty effect? Yet they went forth, and unassisted by any outward pomp or external display, and in the face of fierce persecution and death, they proclaimed their message. And what was the effect? Did not Jewish prejudice and pagan superstition part from the human mind? Did not their word become a power of life, of moral renovation, of spiritual joy? It penetrated as if by electric force, silently but irresistibly, into the hearts of men in all quarters of the world. Everywhere the word of God grew mightily and prevailed. So was it at the time of the Reformation, when Christianity, rising up out of the grave in which for a season superstition had entombed it, put on the strength of a new life, and went forth to regenerate and bless the world. It raised up Luther and Melancthon, and Calvin and Knox. Yet how insignificant were these agents in themselves, how little fitted to draw observation! But divine power was with them, a hidden, unseen force transcending all calculations, overcoming all obstacles, and bringing thousands of willing hearts to the foot of the Cross. It was this that made a poor monk the reformer of Christendom, and Knox the reformer of his native land. And so is it still. Hearts touched with divine grace and experiencing the warmth of divine love, impel men to the work of the Cross, and this is the work of every disciple of the Lord. Just as the fountain leaps and dances in the sun, though no eye of man may mark it; just as the sun

shines because it cannot help shining ; so does the Christian man delight to impart the knowledge of the blessing in which he himself rejoices. And what is the effect ? Feeble as the agency may be, it is laden with mighty power. Holding forth the word of life, the Christian man becomes a light unto the world. Feeble though his light be, he yet lights others, and becomes to them a means of salvation and life. Thus the kingdom of God comes, though "*it cometh not with observation.*"

IV. THOUGH THE KINGDOM OF GOD COME NOT WITH OBSERVATION, THE EFFECTS OF ITS COMING ARE PLAINLY MANIFEST.

While God's kingdom of grace in the heart is noiselessly commenced, while its progress and extension are silently accomplished, it does not follow that its effects are not to be apparent. It happens to be precisely the reverse. Wherever the mighty power of divine grace has been exerted upon the soul, wherever it has produced by its silent, noiseless energy that great spiritual change in the conversion of a soul to God, it is ever accompanied by effects the most manifest and distinctive. You cannot have the mightiness of divine power exerted, and yet no change to indicate the effect of the energy. The leaven put into the three measures of meal is soon found to leaven the whole lump, and so certainly does the leaven of divine grace leaven the whole man. It tells upon his heart, his feelings, his character, his whole life and its pursuits. It makes him a new creature. You have as much right to expect distinctive results from the nature of the mighty power exerted, to find in the case of conversion certain well-defined effects following, as you have the certainty that light will follow the rising of the sun. Nay, if these effects be lacking, then you may question

the exercise of any such mighty power, or the existence of any such spiritual change. The change in the case of conversion is radical and complete. It does not tell of something which a man may assume as a matter of purchase, or hold as he does a piece of property. It is something that enters into the essence of the man's spiritual being, and thus gives character and direction to the whole staple of his feelings and activities. Conversion is just the returning, the rebinding of an alienated and dissevered soul to God. Only see what are the conditions of alienation, and you can easily see what takes place in conversion. All of thought, of affection and habit, which sways the soul away from God, is irreligion. Now conversion is just the rebringing, the returning of the soul to God, the cord which, through divine grace by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, binds the soul of the believer to the divine throne; and all holy thoughts, and brave resolves, and pure affections, and self-denying actions flow out of it, and are but the evidence of the reality of its existence. Wherever you have the kingdom of grace in the heart, you must have the life and actions which declare it. There must be the walk of self-denial and holiness, of piety toward God, of honesty and beneficence to men. It must be a life of stern conflict with evil, of ever-increasing purity and abounding goodness, of moral and spiritual conquests, of ever-advancing, ever-expanding spiritual life. The stream tells the character of the fountain-head as the water leaps up into the light of day, and so will the heart be known as its thoughts and feelings leap up into the light of action. The odour of the perfume will tell the nature of the ointment that is poured forth. Grace in the heart will tell its presence by the change it produces on the whole spiritual man. The seed sown soon springs up

to tell its presence in the soil, and to declare the character of its abundant fruit. "Whoso sucks the poisoned wound envenoms his own veins," and soon falls prostrate before the poison he has imbibed. The presence of the virus in the blood is soon made manifest. What is painful, what is blissful to man's body or soul cannot long remain concealed. If, then, there be grace in any man's soul, if he be a child of light, he will be a light unto the world. His light will shine before men just because it cannot help shining. If there be salt in the soul it will season the whole conversation, and make it profitable to the use of edifying. The power of divine grace within the man will make its presence to be seen in his whole spiritual bearing and course of action. Though "the kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation," yet wherever it exists in any man's soul it will testify that it has come by the mighty power of God.

IN CONCLUSION. Let us notice first of all the need there is to have the kingdom of God within us. Religion is not something of mere forms and observances. It is not something merely of duties. It necessarily leads to the faithful and loving discharge of all commanded duties, but it is not a thing merely of duties. It is the grace of God in the heart. It is a state of soul towards God. It is a soul by grace reunited to God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. What is the value of faith? It is just this, that it reunites us to God by humble trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, out of whom we receive all the fulness of divine power for salvation and life. Be not deceived, I pray you. Religion is not something that we do, something we are to regard, something we are to enjoy. Religion is something that we are, something that we have in us. It is Christ by grace in the heart. It is

the heart thereby, through Christ and by faith in Him, rebound and reunited to God. Keep in mind, I beseech you, that the kingdom of God is not something *without* you. The kingdom of God is *within* you.

Then, as the kingdom of God is commenced in the heart without observation by mighty power of divine grace, let us seek that it be rightly commenced there. Let us labour to have our hearts under the influence of divine grace. Let it be the matter of our daily prayer and daily effort that ours may be a heart experience of the gospel of the grace of God. Let us not rest with a mere name, with a mere visible relationship to the kingdom of God. But let us strive that its foundation may be laid deep down in our hearts by the power of divine grace, for only thus can we experience its blessings. Ours is not to be a religion for mere outward show. Such a religion is worthless and vain. But let us see that we have experience of the kingdom of God, which, being internal and spiritual, "*cometh not with observation.*"

And further, let us never forget that practical godliness, godliness flowing from a heart that loves God, is the grand prescribed evidence of all true grace in the heart. True godliness is just God served and obeyed because He is trusted and loved. Let us be concerned to give this evidence of Christ being in us by His Spirit the hope of glory. It will be as convincing to others as it will be comforting to ourselves, while it will testify that we belong to that kingdom of which the Saviour says, "*The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.*"

If, then, the unseen work of grace has been begun in your souls, see that ye have this evidence, the evidence of practical godliness, to declare it. While no eye may mark the operation of that mighty power which converts the soul to God, yet it cannot be exercised

without producing effects which tell that all old things have passed away, that all things have become new, that the man has become a new creature, that he has been born again by the incorruptible seed of the Word, that he has passed from death unto life. See, then, that your lives give evidence of the great spiritual change, by being adorned by all those fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God, and which make a genuine faith in its effects manifest to the observation of man.

Have good evidence to yourselves that the kingdom of God is within you. Do not rest in any external service, in any mere outward profession, as if that were equivalent to the grace of God in the heart. Remember that all salvation depends on Christ, by His Spirit in the heart through faith. If you have opened your hearts by faith to Christ, and accepted Him as your Saviour, then the kingdom of God which cometh not with observation is within you. But without this acceptance of Christ by faith, there is no life in the soul. See, then, that you have life within you. Remember that ere long the opportunity of possessing it shall have gone for ever. See, then, to salvation now. Now is the day of salvation. Now is salvation by Christ freely offered you. Accept Him by faith. In the very moment of faith you have entered the "*kingdom of God which cometh not with observation.*"

VII.

THE SAVIOUR'S INCARNATION.

“ And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee : therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”—LUKE i. 35.

“ THAT holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

Time rolls on. The period has come when earth is to be the scene of an event, the most marvellous in her history. The world has reached the fulness of the time for the mission and manifestation of the Son of God. There is no visible preparation for so wondrous an occurrence. There is nothing in nature to indicate the manifestation of Deity incarnate. The course of nature seems the same, even on the very verge of the revelation of God in garments of flesh. How singular are the ways of the Most High ! Though the whole of providence has been so constructed as to tell that this event is the centre-point of human history, the event on which the happiness of the race is dependent, yet neither does nature proclaim it nor mankind apprehend its coming. There was nothing in the merely external or visible from which human reason could have forecast the approach of that event which has given to this earth a place of the first importance in the universe of God.

Yet the time has come, the time fixed by God for the appearance of His Son has arrived, and providence becomes the handmaid of the divine purpose. The time has been long foretold. Four thousand years have elapsed since God first announced it to the world in the promise: "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." Nineteen hundred years have sped since God said to Abraham, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Six hundred years have come and gone since God proclaimed by the prophet Isaiah, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Immanuel." Three hundred years have passed since God declared by Malachi, "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings." Ages have intervened between the first promise and the fulfilment. But, though long in coming, the Saviour is not late in coming. As He came at the fixed, so He came at the fittest time. The promise was given at the fall, but its fulfilment awaited the fulness of the time. Four thousand years were required to solve the problem of man's utter inability to rescue himself from the ruin of the fall and manifest the necessity of divine intervention. Four thousand years were required to prepare the platform of providence for His presence and the world for His coming. Nay, the lesson of the expiation of guilt by sacrifice had to be lodged in the minds of men by education through a lengthened dispensation of rite and ceremony. But now the problem had been solved, the lesson had been learned, and the time had come. Man had run down to the lowest point. The fall had produced its bitter fruit. Superstition and atheism had ripened into base and brutal passions. The true knowledge of God had almost left the earth. Even

God's own chosen people had almost lost all right conception of Him amidst rites and ceremonies originally intended to reveal the Saviour and prepare them for His coming. The world, in its darkness and ignorance and sin, seemed to cry to heaven for help to save it from universal spiritual putrefaction and ruin. It was now "the fulness of the time."

Just at this crisis there occurs an unostentatious but singular event which proclaims the special and promised intervention of heaven. An angelic messenger "is sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary." He is sent to announce to her that she was to be the mother of the world's Saviour, and in what way He was to be conceived and born. We dwell not now on the circumstances. The Saviour could not come into the world but by birth. He could not be recognised as the Son of God but by immaculate birth. Hence, said the angel, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

You will thus see that in this announcement we have divinity and humanity in our Lord linked together, the holy thing is to be born with the uncreated God. The announcement thus brings before us, through these two natures, the divine and the human, now for the first time inseparably allied, the peculiarity in Christ's person as God-Man Mediator, and which, while singularly manifest in His person, yet extends to all the acts and effects of His Mediatorship. From this very alliance of deity and humanity we have the conjunction of excellences that are strangely diverse and seemingly incompatible. Now,

to set forth this singular conjunction of excellences arising out of this alliance of the human nature and the divine which, meeting in Christ's person and flowing forth throughout all the acts and effects of His Mediatorship, so signally qualify Him for the work of human salvation, we turn your attention to the words here before us in our text: "*That holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*"

Let us then, in the prosecution of our discourse, notice—

I. THE SINGULAR CONJUNCTION OF EXCELLENCES AS MANIFESTED IN CHRIST'S PERSON AND IN THE ACTS OF HIS MEDIATORSHIP. And here notice—

1. *The singular conjunction in Christ's person of deity with humanity.* This is the special truth brought before us in the text. The holy thing to be born of the virgin, the holy humanity which was to proceed from her womb, because of its alliance with the divine nature of the Second Person of the blessed Trinity, was to be called the Son of God.

The Son of God entered our world by the door of birth. A birth is no uncommon occurrence, but this birth has something, as we see from our text, underlying it that makes it a marvellous event. He who enters our breathing world as a tiny infant by the door of birth is the Son of God. True it is that God has many sons. Angels are the sons of God in virtue of creation. When the foundations of the earth were laid, "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted aloud for joy." Redeemed and believing men are sons of God by adoption. "To as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to be called the sons of God, even to them believing in His name." "Beloved, now

are we sons of God." But Christ is God's Son in a sense in which no other stands related to Him ; He possesses the same nature, and He is equal in power and glory with God. Thus is it that in the infant to be born of the virgin, because of the singular alliance of deity with humanity, we have the presence of incarnate God. Nay, unless this be true, His Mediatorship were impossible, for only can He be a daysman between God and man and effect reconciliation if He is able, as the Word made flesh, as God manifest in flesh, to lay His hand upon both. But just as an infant born of the virgin He is possessed of true and proper humanity, so as the Son of God is He possessed of true and proper divinity. He is coeval with God the Father in being, co-spiritual in nature, co-eternal in existence. He is addressed by the same names, He enjoys the same worship, He is entitled to all the glory of God. Christ's true and proper humanity and Christ's true and proper divinity are the two grand pillars of the Christian faith. Take away either, and the whole fabric falls ; His atonement becomes valueless, and all hope of salvation is gone for ever.

Here, then, this great and glorious Being, the infinite, eternal, and immutable God, the Second Person of the Godhead, the Creator of all the worlds that float in the infinity of space, who upholds all by the might of His power, takes up into alliance with His divine nature the nature we possess. He takes to Him a humanity unstained by sin, for sin is not essential to human nature, but only what has degraded, defiled, and ruined it. He becomes bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He unites our nature to Himself in bonds indissoluble. The Son of God becomes the Son of man, and our Elder Brother for ever.

This, then, is a union most marvellous, the alliance of the Creator with the creature, of God with man. The Word is made flesh. The design of this union it is possible to explain, but the union itself is put so much within our comprehension as to make us feel that it infinitely transcends it. The fact, however, is as apparent from the word of God as if written with a sunbeam, and the design is no less clearly revealed. God has purposed the salvation of men by mediation and sacrifice. He has appointed His Son to be the Mediator and Substitute. To mediate with God, He must possess His nature. To mediate with man, He must be clothed in flesh. Here, then, is a Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. In His person you have the nature of man to suffer, and the nature of God to give value to suffering and sacrifice. With such a Mediator the glory of God can never be tarnished, nor the salvation of man imperilled. He comes into the race binding man's nature with His own, binding the race to Himself by the blood of brotherhood, enshrining His Godhead in a tabernacle of flesh. *"That holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."*

2. *The singular conjunction in Christ of glory with humiliation.* This we find alike in Christ's person and acts. In His person they meet in marvellous union. They meet in Him, and they can meet in no other in the whole universe of God. They can meet in no created being, for no created being has infinite perfection. They cannot meet in any of the other persons of the Godhead, for of no other is it written, as of the Son, that He became incarnate.

But, in the person of Christ, glory and humiliation most marvellously combine. While possessing all the perfections of the divine nature, think of the humiliation of the Lord of glory, in assuming the nature of the

creatures He had made. Think of Him, whose word was creation and whose will is providence, allying Himself with human weakness, and condescending to be a partaker of the nature of man. Between a sovereign assuming the condition of his lowest subject and this, there is no analogy. The sovereign only differs from his subject through external circumstances of rank and power. There is no essential difference between the greatest and the meanest of mankind. There is no stooping from a higher to a lower nature. Even between angelic nature and our own there is but little to help us to understand this humiliation, for the nature of angels, like our own, is created and finite. Here, in this act of humiliation, we have the illimitable distance between the finite and the infinite. You cannot tell how low the Son of God stooped when He became man, for you cannot measure the height of infinite perfection. And then, not only was the Word made flesh, but how lowly were the circumstances of His incarnation! He is the Son of a poor woman, born in a stable, laid in a manger because there was no room for Him in the inn. He was born in the hush of night, amidst strangers that cared nothing for the event, in circumstances of lowliness and poverty. Thus came the great God in human form to earth.

And yet think of the rays of glory that shone through all this meanness and humiliation. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost. Though born of a sinning woman, He was conceived and born without sin. Though His nativity was not proclaimed to men with all the pomp and pageantry of earthly glory, yet nature lent its stars and heaven its angels to do Him honour at His birth. Though to the eye of some there lay in that manger only a babe in all the feebleness of infancy, yet in His arm there was concealed the power that wielded the sovereignty of the

universe, and was destined to triumph over all the guilt of man and over all the principalities and the powers of hell.

Then what a singular alliance of glory with humiliation did His life display ! As a child He was subject to His mother and reputed father. When He entered on His public ministry, He was so poor that He had not where to lay His head. He depended on the charity of others for His sustenance. He was a weary, wandering, homeless traveller on the earth He had made. He was rejected and despised of men. As we near the close of His life, how bitter were the reproaches He endured, the ignominy to which He was subjected, the sorrows He experienced, till He yielded up the ghost ! And yet amidst all this humiliation can we not discern the glory of the divinity which the garment of His flesh concealed ? Look at His power over nature. He trod upon the waves of the sea, and it bore Him. It was as a pavement of marble beneath the soles of His feet. He rebuked the storm, and the winds and the waves were in a moment lulled to rest. He stretched His hand over nature, and she owned her Lord. He spoke, and the blind saw, the ears of the deaf were unstopped, the lame man leapt as an hart, and the dead woke up into life. The prince of darkness was forced to obey His word, and legions of demons durst not stay His orders. The very hearts of men He could explore, and their thoughts reveal, telling that to Him belonged the power and the prerogative of God.

Nor were there altogether lacking scenes and seasons when He uplifted the covering which concealed His glory. Think of Tabor's mount, where His face did shine as the sun, and His garments were white as the light.

Draw near, however, to the close of His life, the

darkest scene of His humiliation, and even that was not wholly untinged with brightness. While He goes forth from Gethsemane to meet His murderers, His touch heals the wound which the sword of Peter had made. Nay, amidst all the meekness that shone forth amidst His sufferings, amidst all the forgiveness that can only pray for His murderers, think, I pray you, of the glory that surrounds His cross in the pardon of a soul. Never did there shine from the depths of humiliation such light to irradiate a character and to pronounce it unparalleled and divine. And then, think of the glory which even nature put upon Him as He hung upon the cross. The face of the sun was covered with sackcloth of the thickest darkness. The earth quaked. The rocks rent. The veil of the temple was torn in twain; and the bodies of the dead were upturned to the view of the living. Nor were these voices of nature unexplainable nor unexplained. Listen to the words of the centurion, the explained utterance of nature's rude emotion: "Truly this was the Son of God."

3. *The singular conjunction in Christ of holiness with suffering and death.* It is declared in our text that what was to be born of the virgin was to be a "holy thing." The humanity of our Lord was to be perfectly holy. The God-Man Mediator must needs be "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." For this purpose He was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Ghost. For this purpose He had no father according to the flesh from whom He could inherit any taint of original transgression. He was "the seed of the woman," "made of a woman." "In all things made like unto His brethren, yet without sin."

The guilt of Adam's first sin was transmitted to all his offspring. The covenant of life made with Adam respected all his posterity. The guilt of Adam's first

sin is put to the account of all his seed. The second Adam, the Lord from heaven, was not the son of Adam. The guilt of original sin, which descends from Adam through every father to his offspring, could not attach to Him. As he had no human father by whom Adam's guilt could be transmitted to His humanity, so was He conceived and born without sin.

And thus, born without sin, His life was a life of holiness. Sin had no place in His soul. In all the confidence of perfect innocence He could say, "Who is he that convinceth me of sin?" While His life was unstained by sin and guilt, even Pilate could testify to His innocence, as he gave Him to His murderers: "Take ye Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him." The very thief upon the cross could say, "This man hath done nothing amiss." In his heart the enemy of souls could find no sinful imagination on which to act with temptation. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." Here then is One, the only One since the fall that ever trod earth, who stands forth the perfect personation of holiness, the complete embodiment of the law of God, every pulse of whose heart beats with the energy of perfect love to God and to man. The light of holiness shone forth from His character, and was the glory of His life.

And yet He is the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, suffering as man never suffered, and dying as man never died. Need we say that this is something especially marvellous. This is certainly the union of two things in Him that are strangely diverse, seemingly incompatible. It is a most singular alliance. Suffering is the consequence of sin, and yet He had no sin, He knew no sin. Sorrow is the necessary consequence of transgression, and yet there was no guile found in His mouth. Death is

the wages of sin, the penalty of God's broken law, and yet His whole life is but the incarnation of perfect purity and love.

Now it is just here that we come to the solution of the singular mystery of the Saviour's incarnation, of this wondrous alliance of deity with humanity, of glory with humiliation, of holiness with suffering and death. Christ's incarnation is the result of covenant engagement. He has been made flesh, because by voluntary consent from all eternity He had been made a surety. Humiliation must be His, because only by humiliation could the work of suretyship be done. He must suffer and die, because only by suffering and death could the penalty of the sin of those for whom He was a surety be met, and their salvation be secured. Hence, though He was holy, He became liable to suffering and death.

But how could suffering and death reach Him, since He was free from sin, and suffering and death are the wages of sin? It is admitted that suffering and death could never have been His if guilt had not been His. Hence we would ask of those who deny Christ's death of substitution, how, in the view of their creed of negation, Christ happened to die at all? What, however, is guilt? It is liability to punishment, and it is either personal or imputed. By personal guilt we mean liability to punishment on account of personal trespass. By imputed guilt we mean liability to punishment on account of the trespasses of others laid to the charge of him who is free from all crime. Now look at our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He lives a life of suffering, and dies a death of curse. Their guilt must be His. Without guilt there could be no such suffering and death under the government of a God of justice. Without guilt there can be no infliction of suffering and death. Our Lord has no

personal guilt, for "He is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." No, He has no personal guilt. There is not a single stain upon His character, there is not an excellence lacking to the perfect holiness of the incarnate God. Yet there must be guilt to account for all this suffering and death. Yes! look at the Lord Jesus Christ, and, while you see in Him no personal guilt, you will yet see on Him the burden of imputed guilt. The guilt of our sins was laid upon Him. "God made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." Though personally He was free from all sin, God "laid on Him the iniquities of us all." As the Lamb of God He bears the guilt of sinners, that He might bear its punishment of death, and that sinners might be saved. The guilt is laid upon Him. He stands in the sinner's room. He suffers the death which was the sinner's due, that God's law might be satisfied, and the sinner redeemed. Hence the necessity of this singular conjunction of holiness with suffering and death. It tells of the singular conjunction of holiness with imputed guilt ere by death sin could be expiated. Christ, the Lamb of God, is laid on the altar for sacrifice. He is only fitted to be a sacrificial victim, to have sin laid upon Him, to take away sin, as He is free from sin. Unless free from sin, unless He was "that holy thing," He could never make expiation for human guilt. But, free from all personal sin, He takes the guilt of our sins upon Him. Death is the desert of guilt, and He died. He bore the penalty of our guilt. He died in our room. By His death He has redeemed us. He gave Himself to death a ransom for us. Hence this singular alliance of holiness with suffering and death.

Now these are the three things in respect of Christ's person and acts as Mediator that make the contemplation of Him so wondrous, and yet, though strangely diverse

and seemingly incompatible, they are yet essential to His mediatorship. They are the very things on which all effective mediatorship depends. If Christ be not God as well as man, and if He be not man as well as God, He can never mediate between God and guilty men. If there be not the glory of God under all the veil of His humiliation, then the ends of His mediatorship will never be reached. If there be not holiness, perfect holiness, along with suffering and death, then there is no redemption effected for the guilty, and no atonement made for sin unto God. The lack of any of these three elements, nay, if they be not found together in the person of our Lord, would be the destruction of the very foundation of our Christian faith. It is just because we have all these, and all of them together, that we have in Christ a glorious, all-sufficient Mediator, a Saviour who has secured our redemption by His atoning sacrifice, by His suffering and death. These things explain the words of our text: "*That holy thing that shall be born of Thee shall be called the Son of God.*"

II. THE SINGULAR CONJUNCTION OF THINGS SEEMINGLY DIVERSE IN THE EFFECTS OF CHRIST'S MEDIATORSHIP ITSELF.

1. *Here we have power out of seeming weakness.* To the eye of sense there was little in Christ's person to attract the eyes of men. He was a root out of a dry ground. He was without form or comeliness. There was no beauty in Him that men should desire Him. His countenance was more marred than any man, and His form than the sons of men. He was to them only a poor wandering teacher. His sufferings and sorrows were in their eyes only the lot of common humanity, and when crucified in weakness upon the cross it was only the close of a despised Galilean's life.

There was nothing in the humanity of our Lord, if we except its sinlessness, that withdrew it from the race. He felt the same sorrows. He was subject to the same infirmities. He had experience of the same trials. His humanity did not resist the stroke of affliction. It presented no unusual obstacle to the power of death. The Saviour was led to the cross, and, through the very same weakness of humanity which makes men the prey of death, He was crucified and slain.

And yet through this very weakness we have the birth of an energy of infinite power. But for this weakness, suffering could never have reached the Saviour, nor death have smitten Him. And yet on His suffering and death depended the execution of a work which should complete the purpose of the divine counsels, vindicate the whole of earth's providential history, satisfy every claim of the divine law, and restore a ruined world to God. Nay, but for this weakness that made Christ fit for suffering and death, the power of divine grace could never have reached the hearts of men with salvation and life. Out of that very weakness there comes all the energy that brings the sinner to the foot of the Cross, that shall yet wrest this world from the sovereignty of Satan, and triumph over all the depravity of man and over all the hosts of hell. Thus have we power out of weakness.

2. *Here we have victory out of suffering.* Suffering is not only a sign of weakness, but is a significant token of defeat. The conqueror inflicts suffering upon the conquered, and by it the conquered is subdued. There is little doubt that the wicked men by whose hands Christ was taken and crucified and slain, rejoiced in His suffering and death as a proof of victory over Him. Nay, that the powers of darkness believed His suffering and death to be their triumph, and were glad when they beheld Him bleeding and dying

upon the cross. Ever since His birth Satan had waged with Him an incessant war. He had stirred up the minds of depraved men against Him. He stayed not till he had compassed His crucifixion. Now all his designs are accomplished. The Saviour is crucified, and falls before the stroke of death.

This very suffering, by which Satan hoped to obtain a triumph, was his decisive defeat. This suffering and death were the dissolution of Satan's empire. They struck away the sceptre of a rebel world from his hands. That suffering and death had purchased men for God. It was the price of their redemption out of the hand of death and hell. Death by Christ's death was slain, his power destroyed, his empire overthrown. Never was such a victory gained. Death is defeated through death, and Satan, through the issue of his most consummate policy, is overthrown and despoiled. The work of human redemption is accomplished, and the word that falls from the Saviour's lips, "It is finished," announces it to the whole universe of God. "By death He has destroyed him that had the power of death, and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Death has put the sceptre of universal dominion into the Saviour's hands. It has secured that a redeemed world shall be subject to His sway. It has secured the sovereignty of Christ's mediatorial reign.

3. *Here we have blessing out of curse.* Our Lord was made of a woman, made under the law, made under it that He might in our room obey its precepts, satisfy its claims, and endure its curse. Taking upon Him the nature of the creature, He also became subject to the law as the sinner's substitute and surety, and bore its curse. That penalty or curse was suffering and death.

That suffering and death Christ bore. He was made

a curse for us. "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." He was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. He bore the wrath and curse of God, due for our sin. God found our guilt upon Him as the sinner's substitute and surety, and He smote Him with its punishment. He trod the fierce winepress of the wrath of God. God poured out on Him the vials of His wrath. All His billows and His waves passed over Him. He was made a curse.

And yet out of that curse that was borne by Him as our substitute and surety, there comes to us guilty and miserable sinners the overflowing fulness of infinite blessing. Had this curse not been borne by Him, we must have lived without hope, and died in despair. It was the curse which we must for ever have borne, and which would have weighed us down to hell. But He took it upon Him and endured it. The dark thunder-cloud of divine wrath which overhung us has been dissipated. God looks down upon us from a smiling heaven. Thus is it that mercy flows down in copious streams of blessing from the throne of divine justice, and the guiltiest sinner can be cheered with the experience of God's forgiving love. The bar to the exercise of divine grace has been removed, and the just God is still just, while He justifies the ungodly believing in Jesus. This is the sheet-anchor of the sinner's hope. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." In Him, then, there is pardon for the guilty, happiness for the miserable, salvation for the lost. Out of the curse there has come blessing.

4. *Here we have life out of death.* Death is the privation of life. It is the due desert and wages of sin. It is, in its widest sense, not simply the separation of the soul from the body, but the separation of the soul from God

and His love, and the fearful infliction of His wrath. This death Christ endured. In His cup all the elements of death are to be found. His soul was parted from His body. He not only suffered under the hiding of His Father's countenance, but He bore the infliction of His wrath. He endured the rigid satisfaction, death for death. He gave up the ghost.

This death Christ endured, that life might be restored to dead souls. By His death he purchased life for sinners, by His Spirit He bestows it, by His grace He continues it, and by that same grace He completes it. Through Him the Holy Spirit enters the believing heart with His love. Through the influence of His grace by the Spirit, the sinner opens his heart to Christ in the day of his effectual calling, and from that moment he is alive unto God. That moment when the sinner believes, the moment he accepts Christ as his Saviour, he has passed from death unto life. The life which Christ has purchased for him by His Spirit He has bestowed, and it is the pledge and the earnest of that everlasting glory which shall be his in the mansions of eternal day. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." The death of Christ is thus the very source of life to the soul. But for death, the death of Christ, the soul of the sinner must have been for ever dead. Now, through that death by faith it is alive, and all its life it derives from that death by which life has been purchased and procured, and which is the sure guarantee of life eternal. Out of death there is life.

IN CONCLUSION, how ought this event here before us to be viewed by us?

1. *It ought to be contemplated with adoring gratitude.* The nativity of our Lord is a marvel. The person and

the acts revealed by it are a marvel. It is the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in flesh. But why is God revealed in flesh? He is revealed as God's appointed Saviour. He is God's unspeakable gift of love to our ruined race. God loved us, and He gave Him. God so loved us that He gave Him. God so loved us that He sent Him. God so loved us that He spared Him not, but delivered Him to the death for us all. But for the manifestation of Him in flesh, we should have been for ever lost to God, to holiness, to happiness, to heaven. Well may our hearts be filled with gratitude and thankfulness and praise, as we remember that the "holy thing" born of the virgin was the Son of God and Saviour of men.

2. *It becomes us to contemplate the event with lively faith.* It is only the eye of faith that can rightly discern the wonders which the person and acts of Christ as mediator reveal, for to the eye of sense there is manifested no vision of His spiritual glory. Faith alone can discern the glory of deity allied with humanity, of holiness allied with humiliation and suffering and death. From the eye of the world, the unbelieving world, Christ's person and its glory are awfully concealed. Like the high priest passing within the veil, faith casts aside the covering which conceals Christ's person and His mediatorial glory from the eyes of worldly men, and, with its hand upon the mercy-seat, gazes with eye entranced and heart of rapture upon the revealed glory of its Saviour and God. It sees in His person the highest wisdom, the noblest mercy, and the richest love. It lays hold on Him, and holds fast by Him to the saving of the soul.

3. *What a comfort it is for you, O believer, to turn your eye of faith to the wondrous person and glorious actings of Christ Jesus, our blessed Lord!* He stands forth before you as your accomplished, all-sufficient Saviour, who

has by His incarnation, obedience, and death done all that is needed in order to your salvation, and on whom you have simply to rest for salvation and life. He is all in all to you. He is made of God to you believing in Him, wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. All you need is in Him, all your life, and peace, and joy, all your grace, and sanctification, and eternal glory. Ever remember that the whole of your Christian life is simply to trust in Him, and, by grace received out of Him, to do and bear His will till He come again to receive you to Himself, that you may ever be with the Lord.

4. *Last of all, O sinner as yet unbelieving, let me ask, why remain in unbelief?* Is not Christ, by His incarnation, and obedience, and suffering, and death, a Saviour suited to you? Is He not able and willing to save you? Remember that by His death in our room and stead, He has wrought out and brought in a glorious and complete, a perfect and accepted righteousness for sinners, for the sake of which, accepted by faith, God is willing to receive and pardon every believing sinner, and give him the experience of His grace and love. Do not think that you require to do, that you may be saved. No, Christ has done all. His death was a complete satisfaction to divine law and justice, a complete payment of our debt of guilt, a complete expiation. Christ has done all that requires to be done in order that God may pardon and bless. All was done when He said, "It is finished." All that you require to do, O sinner, is to accept Christ and what He has done for present salvation and life. Take hold of Christ by faith. He invites you to trust Him. He beseeches you to trust Him. He commands you to trust Him. Believe and live. Look and be saved. Come to Him and have rest. Remember that this is the work of God, that ye believe in Him

whom He hath sent. This is the commandment of God, that ye believe in the name of His Son. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Now then is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation. "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Let yours be the utterance of him who said, "Lord, I believe : help mine unbelief." "I am Thine, save me, for Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." Look up for the grace of the Divine Spirit, that you may take Christ by faith to the saving of your souls, for indeed it shall be a sad thing if you should leave this scene, notwithstanding all the gospel light which you have enjoyed, and all the offers of divine grace which you have heard, uncured of sin, laden with gospel guilt, the guilt of unbelief. May it be given each of you in behalf of Christ to believe in His name. Which may the Lord grant, and to His name shall be all the glory now and ever. Amen.

VIII.

THE SELF-EVIDENCING POWER OF FAITH.

“ If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater : for this is the witness of God which He hath testified of His Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself : he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar ; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son.”—1 JOHN v. 9, 10.

It cannot be asserted with anything like truth, that there is no faith among men. So far from this, faith is the very heart's blood of social life, without which society could not for one moment exist. It forms the cement of every domestic relation, of every social tie. It is the mainspring of every commercial transaction—of all the complicated machinery of trade and commerce. The whole of public credit is based on confidence between man and man. Whenever the delicate mechanism of public credit is struck, whenever man loses faith in man, then follow derangements, disorder, and distress.

Look, however, how widespread and influential is this power of faith. It makes a child look with confidence to a mother's affection and a father's help. It has faith in their unvarying tenderness and care. The saddest blow that can smite a young heart is when that confidence is stricken to the dust. See what confidence the wife has in her husband's love, and how trustfully she leans on him as the sweetener of her care. How cheerless is her life when that confidence is rent from her for

ever! Faith is the bond of friendship, that mysterious cement of the soul. Destroy it, and the tie of friendship is for ever ruptured. Faith enters into the mart of trade and commerce. It is because the merchant has faith in his customer that he supplies him with the products of his labour and honours his order, though he dwell in a distant land. Nay, there is scarcely a single act of life in this world of sense and sight that is not the result of faith and the evidence of its power. The farmer sows in faith that the year will crown him with an abundant harvest. The sailor sails in faith that he will reach the appointed haven. The soldier goes to the battlefield in faith that he will survive its perils and be victorious in the contest. If hope be the morning star of life, it is by the light of faith it shines to cheer the hearts and irradiate the pathway of the sons of men.

It is thus to be noticed, that when the word of God inculcates faith, it does not inculcate some operation of mind with which men are totally unfamiliar. It only asks them to give to God the credit which they give to men. They have no lack of faith as respects each other. Faith in men is often the blindest credulity. But they receive the word of God with hearts of the sturdiest unbelief. As long as they deal with human testimony, they are the most facile believers. Whenever they come to deal with the testimony of God, with what He has revealed for faith, they are instantly incredulous. This is the sin of multitudes. It is the grand sin of all who turn a deaf ear to divine truth under the hearing of the gospel. Need we wonder that it is provocative of divine wrath? Think of the word of the great God being thus dishonoured and His testimony despised, that blind and erring man should thus dare to discredit the revelation of heaven! It shows their awful folly and prognosticates

their terrible ruin. Every reason for faith in man becomes overwhelmingly instant when you speak of faith in God. If he who is mutable and erring receives credit, is the great God, whose word is immutable and unerring, to be set at nought? Is man thus to be honoured and God despised? How forcibly do these words of our text present at once the duty we owe to divine truth and strike at the root of human unbelief: "*If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.*"

In immediate context, the apostle sets Christian faith and what are its natural and necessary effects in love to God, in obedience to His will, in victory over the world, its temptations and trials, directly before us. He shows that this faith, which purifies the heart and overcomes the world, is based on the divine testimony, while it terminates in the person of Him whom that testimony reveals. He thus shows that faith so based and so effective of spiritual fruits is only consistent with the highest exercise of enlightened reason. "*If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.*"

In prosecution of our discourse we shall consider—

I. THE WITNESS HERE ADDUCED. "*If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.*" And here we have to notice—

1. *The lesser Witness.* We receive the witness of men. "*If we receive the witness of men,*" says the apostle. It is something that cannot be gainsaid or denied, that we do receive the witness of men. Everything that has the shape of truth, if given as matter of testimony, instantly becomes part and parcel of our faith. We neither dispute nor deny. The intellect, whose function it is to discern truth at once, receives it, if only certified by the mouth of sufficient witness-bearing. No man can

wittingly believe a lie. It must take the shape and form of truth, and be supported by something like evidence, ere it can get for itself a place among the soul's convictions, and the very moment that its true character is discovered it is at once cast forth from the chamber of the soul. All human testimony, however, if only sufficiently accredited, easily becomes the matter of our faith. Nay, every hour we live, we are found acting in faith upon the testimony of human witness-bearing. I hear that a person is sick, and, crediting the testimony, I go to visit him. You hear that a friend is desirous to see you, and, crediting the testimony, you go to his abode. Faith is the very law of ordinary business. You learn that a merchant is solvent, and, crediting the testimony, you entrust him with your goods. You never take a step in life without crediting the testimony that it will be profitable or safe. Every letter you receive requires the exercise of faith in the writer. You believe your parents, your friends, your companions. You have no doubt of the truth of what they say. Your whole life is thus only a receiving of the truths of the lesser witness of men. You receive readily, daily, hourly, the witness of men.

2. *The greater Witness.* "*The witness of God is greater.*" As much as God is greater than man, so is His testimony. It is greater in respect of the character of the witness; for what is man the creature, when compared with the great God who created him? In our law, the credit due to a witness depends on two things—on the trustworthiness of the witness, and on the probability of the things attested. His trustworthiness depends on his means of knowledge and his desire to speak the truth. Here, then, is a witness whose knowledge is omniscience, and whose testimony is the utterance of the infallible God. He cannot err. He cannot be mistaken.

His word is not liable to contradiction or change. Can you find any witness among men that is infallibly certain? Yet infallibly certain is the evidence of the infallible God. He cannot deceive. He has no reason or motive to deceive. This, then, is surer ground to go upon than the witness-bearing of men. You have God's witness-bearing, the sure ground of an abiding testimony.

Now, what does God do with you? He comes to you with His Bible, and He asks you to believe Him. He does not say that you are to give no credit to man. Without this, society could not exist. But He asks you, while you give credit to man, that you should also give credit to God. The great fact respecting men is that they give credit to the lesser witness, and give no credit to the greater. They believe what man says, but they do not believe God. And yet, who of the two is most entitled to faith? There is a ready entrance for human testimony to the understanding and heart. Is, then, the testimony of the great God to be set aside and set at nought? There is no need for evidence to testify the widespread nature of unbelief. The truth is, that when the testimony of God and man conflict, men are ever apt to believe the statement of the lesser witness; and even when there is no conflicting utterance between them, the word of man is believed and the word of God disregarded. Go throughout the whole range of human society, and you will find that this is the grand fact concerning men. And yet, what more unnatural, what more terribly ruinous to the soul, when the sum of all saving religion is just the believing what God testifies? What is the grand distinction among men? It is just the believing the testimony of God. The unbeliever is guilty of this singular and soul-ruining inconsistency. He receives the witness of men and rejects the witness of God. For

what ought to be his duty on the plainest grounds of reason, not to speak of all right religion? “*If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.*”

II. THE TESTIMONY EXHIBITED. “*For this is the witness of God, which He hath testified of His Son.*” Every part of revelation is God’s testimony. The whole is to be credited, and, if really believed, will have its due effect upon the heart and life. The grand design, however, of God’s testimony is concerning His Son,—to reveal Him as a Saviour,—and thus the Bible is emphatically “the witness of God, which He hath testified of His Son.”

The sum and substance of God’s testimony concerning Christ, is that in Him is eternal life for men who are perishing through sin and lying in the depths of spiritual death. For the purpose of unfolding this glowing, soul-saving truth, He has set forth Christ in all the glory of His person, and character, and work. He turns men’s eyes to His vicarious sacrifice, to His perfect propitiation, to His accepted salvation. He declares Him to be God’s appointed Saviour, who is able to save even to the uttermost—who is all-sufficient to raise men from the depths of spiritual death to spiritual life,—to reinstate them in the divine favour,—to reimpress on them the divine image,—to restore them to God and make them meet for the enjoyment of eternal glory. He exhibits Christ in all the fulness and freeness of His salvation, as offered without money and without price,—as willing as He is able to save, as one who will not cast away the soul that seeks Him, but will give to every seeking sinner the experience of the efficacy of His saving power. He declares that no sinner need die, if he will only trust Him by faith. And then, on the ground of this testimony, He pleads with sinners in the language of earnest ex-

postulation : "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" "Look unto Him, and be ye saved." This is the Saviour suited to you, free to you, needed by you, all-sufficient for you. "*This is the witness of God, which He hath testified of His Son.*"

We dwell not at length on all the varied aspects of the divine testimony, which is matter to us of God's witness-bearing. We only say that we take this book as the sum and substance of divine testimony. It is the voice of God to the children of men. It came down fresh from the Almighty's throne. It is a testimony as certain and infallible as God Himself, and as permanently abiding as the throne of the immutable. There is not an utterance of it but is very verity. You may rest your souls upon it, for it partakes of the immutability of the Rock of ages. "The grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away; but the word of the Lord abideth for ever." Not one jot or tittle of it shall pass away till all be fulfilled. It is the only thing permanent in this world of change. It can neither be clouded by darkness nor affected by vicissitude. It holds forth, and shall hold forth until time be no more, an all-sufficient Saviour to a world of sinners. It does it on the testimony of God Himself. God Himself tells us what He is, what He has done, what He is able to effect. It is God's testimony of love to which we are required to listen, as it unfolds His glorious excellency and infinite ability to save. It is testimony we may well credit. It is witness-bearing we may well receive, for it is not the testimony of men, but of God. "*For this is the witness of God, which He hath testified of His Son.*"

III. THE EVIDENCE FURNISHED. "*He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.*" Faith

in divine testimony, ever inseparable from faith in Christ, is an important principle in the human soul. It produces direct effects upon the spiritual man. It has its appropriate feelings, and emotions, and exercise, and thus becomes the inward witness to the truth of the divine testimony.

1. *Notice what faith in any earthly witness produces.* As is testimony believed, so is its effect. Let some affectionate father or loving mother be told that the child on whom their heart's love rests has been suddenly smitten with affliction, and you will soon see that the testimony has its appropriate effects in the sadness and sorrow of their hearts. Let any of us be promised some special good by a loving and beloved friend, and the testimony believed fills our hearts with gratitude and love. The state of mind which the testimony produces shows at once that it has obtained for itself a lodgment in the soul. Mark, however, the result when testimony is disbelieved. It produces no effect, either upon the mind or life. Little difficulty have we, in regard to earthly things, in marking the effects of believed testimony. It influences the whole man. It produces effects consistent with the character of the truth believed—if of sorrow, it produces sorrow—if of joy, it produces joy—if requiring gratitude, it produces gratitude. It moulds the soul's feelings to the likeness of itself, and thus tells its self-evidencing power. Even in regard to earthly things, "he that believeth hath the witness in himself."

Now, look at faith as it respects the greater witness and the divine testimony. It cannot be deficient in self-evidencing power of inward witness. There must be, where the testimony is believed, a state of mind in some measure corresponding with the character of the truth believed. If by faith I lay hold on Christ as revealed

by God in His testimony, as able and willing to save me, if I believe that He is an all-sufficient Saviour, and cast my soul upon Him, this act of faith cannot take place without its appropriate effects. There will be more or less of the peace and joy that are found in believing, and this to the believer is the witness in himself. If faith works by love, then this also will have its appropriate effect. The soul will embrace the Lord in the arms of its affection, and Christ's name will fall upon its ear like dew under the stillness of a summer sky. If faith purifies the heart, then sin will be hated, and God's will loved. If faith overcomes the world, its troubles and its temptations, by raising the soul above things seen and sensible, then the evil of the world will be resisted, and God's law will be obeyed. You will thus see that faith has a self-evidencing power and an inward witness. By the effects which faith produces, "he that believeth hath the witness in himself." Nay, take the soul awakened to a sense of sin and spiritual danger, is there no difference between its feelings now, when believing in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, and when formerly under a sense of sin and wrath? Will there be no difference in the spiritual states? Will there be no sense of comfort and relief, though the sinner by faith has cast his burden of guilt upon the Lord, and finds that the burden of his guilt is gone? Why, there is an inward experience of comfort and gladness proportionate to the heart's faith in Him by whom salvation has been enjoyed. This is the inward witness. "He that believeth hath the witness in himself."

2. *Mark, still further, that faith also bears witness to the truth of the testimony.* The faith that receives the testimony of God becomes itself a witness to the truth. It has the experimental evidence of its power. You

may as well attempt to dislodge the rock of ocean from its bed, as attempt to dislodge from the believing soul the truth of the Bible as the testimony of God. Faith has engraven its truth upon the heart and conscience, as with a pen of iron and with the point of a diamond. The temptations and trials of time can never erase it. It is ineffaceable by finite power. This, after all, is the most impressive of all evidence on the part of the individual to the truth of the divine testimony. There is no evidence like experimental evidence, the evidence of a felt experience. It rises up out of the depth of the soul's consciousness, as a rock out of the depths of ocean. He that believes knows what he believes to be true, for he feels it to be true. "*He has the witness in himself.*"

IV. THE SPECIAL ISSUE DECLARED. "*He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record God gave of His Son.*"

It is indeed a difficult task to show men their unbelief. Our Lord tells us that the very first part of the work of the Holy Spirit is to convince men of sin, because they believe not on Him. While we look at the issue here declared, there are several elements that require our attention, that we may show the terrible guilt of unbelief.

1. *Notice whose testimony it is that unbelief rejects.* It is the testimony which God has given. It is not the record of man. It is not a matter of mere human testimony. Even to set that aside, if sufficiently supported and attested, would be no small trespass. But in this case it is the testimony of God. God has spoken. His testimony is a message of mercy, compassion, and love. It is confirmed by such evidence, that nothing but the darkest unbelief could possibly reject it. The love of sin

can be the only source of unbelief. What is the substance of the record? It is this—that God is love—that in love He has given His Son to die for the guilty—that He made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be justified freely by the grace of God. This, then, is God's testimony which unbelief through the love of sin rejects. It rejects the record which God gave of His Son.

2. *Notice what unbelief is.* It is a doubting, disbelieving, and setting aside the testimony of God. Many other features may characterize it, but this is what it does. It says, I cannot think that God loves me. You may indeed, if you are still an unbelieving sinner, be sure that God cannot love you with complacency, but is it not true that with the love of mercy He does set before you, even you, the way of life. Then you may say, I do not doubt God's love, but I doubt whether I have accepted Christ. But if you doubt Him, why does it not lead you to instant activity in dependence on divine grace, that the doubt may be removed? Why are you not earnest day by day for the gracious influences of God's blessed Spirit, and why do you not feel the expression of the very doubt to be a terrible evil to the soul? There is something that lies deeper in the soul than all this, and that is the love of sin, which leads you to doubt, to disbelieve, and set aside the testimony of the living God.

3. *Notice what unbelief does.* The unbeliever "hath made God a liar." Here is the terrible guilt of unbelief. It tells God that He is a liar. While it pretends self-diffidence, it is really the most blasphemous insult that can be offered to God. It says, I will believe any human being sooner than I will believe God. God declares that through His Son He is willing to forgive; unbelief will

not believe it. God declares that His Son is able and willing to save; unbelief rejects it. God proclaims that He will receive the guilty, guilty though he be, through Christ; unbelief scorns it. It says no, to the strongest expressions of divine mercy and the tenderest revelations of grace. No wonder it is a soul-damning sin. "It hath made God a liar."

4. *Notice, unbelief does all this through pride.* Not from hatred of sin, but from love of sin, not from self-humiliation, but from self-righteousness. Pride and self-righteousness arm the soul against the voice of God. It is pride that makes a man talk of his own unworthiness, when pressed with the offers of divine mercy. It is the love of sin that keeps the soul from Him who alone can guide the feet into the ways of peace. It is self-righteousness that will not submit to the righteousness of God. Pride of heart is the soul of unbelief. It keeps the spirit armed against the divine testimony. It leads the soul to turn a deaf ear to the divine entreaty, and thus the sinner through unbelief makes God a liar, to his soul's present and eternal ruin.

IN CONCLUSION. Let him who believes rejoice in the inward witness—the experimental evidence which through the Divine Spirit attests the truth of the divine testimony. That is a spring of joy and solace to the soul. It keeps the man's heart right in all weathers. It bears him up under all perplexities and trials. It is an inward spiritual sunlight to the whole spiritual man.

Do ye not believe? It is not because there is not sufficient testimony and sufficient evidence. It is because you love death rather than life. Oh, choose the better part. Ere long, choice will be gone from you. Receive the testimony God hath given of His Son. Rest upon it with all your heart, and you will have life, joy, and peace.

IX.

GO AND TELL JESUS.

“And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.”—MATT. xiv. 12.

THE life of a great and godly man has been closed by a death of violence. John the Baptist, the forerunner of our Lord, has been beheaded to gratify the vengeful feelings of an imperious woman. Most mysterious are the ways of divine providence, most singular is it that the life of such a man should be closed by such a death; that he of whom our Lord could say, “Among them that are born of woman there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist,” should fall a victim to a proud woman’s revenge, that his death should be the pay of a dance and the price of the pleasure of a foolish king. What revelations of the wondrous ways of God shall another world set before us, when all the providences of time shall be illumined with celestial light! We need to wait until the great day, that we may clearly discern what now we are called upon most firmly to believe, that all God’s providences to His people are only the manifestations of His wisdom and faithfulness, of His mercy and love.

The headless body of the Baptist was taken by his disciples and buried. The head, which had been the pay of the dance, was borne to Herodias by her daughter. She had compassed his death, and the head of the

Baptist was the proof to her that he no longer lived on earth to trouble her conscience or inflame her pride by rebuke. She most probably exulted in her revenge while the bereaved disciples of the Baptist mourned his loss. It was without doubt a sad day to them on which they took up the body of their master and buried it. No matter though the sun might be shining clearly in the heavens, though the birds were singing sweetly in the grove, though all nature were clad in the gladsomeness of holiday attire, it was yet a sad day to them as they laid in the grave the body of their master, who had been the object alike of their reverence and love. For need I say that it is ever a sad day, the day of burial, if death have borne away from us one who is worthy of affection and entitled to honour and regard. While we may have the good hope through grace that death has closed all the sorrows of our departed friends for evermore, yet this does not bar up the expression of grief that they are gone. That which certifies to us their present and eternal happiness only makes more manifest what we have lost by their removal, and tends to deepen our sorrow in our solitude. And how does all this press upon our hearts when the dark day of the funeral comes, and busy memory recalls the past with its associations and remembrances! Nay, how does desolation sit down upon our spirits when we have seen the dead laid in the grave, and then must leave them there to their long, last sleep, the sleep that knows no waking till the judgment morn! Sad was the day for the disciples of John the Baptist when they laid the body of their master in the tomb.

The disciples of John took up his body and buried it. But they did not sit down under the shadow of their great grief after this work of affection for the dead had been done, and give themselves up to inaction in their discon-

solateness and sorrow. The loss of their master naturally turned their minds to Him of whom he had testified, and to Him they go with the burden of their bereavement. Thus we find that, as soon as the burial had taken place, and the body of the Baptist had been interred by them with loving hands in the place of sepulture, they make their way to the Saviour's presence, that from Him they may receive consolation in the time of their sore trial and sorrow. It is said by the evangelist, "*And his disciples came and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.*"

Now, the course which the disciples of John the Baptist here take in the time of their bereavement and distress is the only one fitted to ensure true comfort in every scene of life. In whatever circumstances we may be placed, whether of joy or sorrow, whether we are in health or in sickness, in the hour of life or of death, there is no way by which we can secure for our souls effective and abiding consolation and comfort but by following the course of those here before us, of whom it is recorded, "*They went and told Jesus.*"

Let us then, in the prosecution of our discourse, endeavour to specify some of the seasons and circumstances in which it becomes us to follow the course taken by the disciples of John the Baptist after their master had been removed from them by a death of violence, only premising that while there is no season of life so unimportant, and no circumstance of life so trifling, as to be borne away beyond the sweep of the example here before us, yet there are certain seasons and circumstances when it becomes each of us especially to do as did the apostles of John the Baptist, to "*go and tell Jesus.*" We would say—

I. GO AND TELL JESUS ALL YOUR CASE WHEN A SENSE OF SIN BURDENS THE CONSCIENCE.—While guilt lies upon

the conscience of every sinner as yet unbelieving and impenitent, yet it is not in every case so much a matter of consciousness as to give him any special sense of its greatness or its evil. Often indeed, though heavily burdened with guilt, he has no sense of the burden. For it is of the very nature of sin, that often the greater the burden of unpardoned guilt the less is it felt. The descent of the soul down the inclined plane of sin is so gradual, and the accumulation of guilt is so gradually and silently effected, that often the sinner reaches a character of fearful wickedness and baseness, heavily laden with guilt, without the sense of it being present to the soul. But in the case of every converted man there comes a time when, through divine grace, the conscience is awakened to a sight and sense of sin, when the burden of guilt is felt, when under its pressure, and with the distinct consciousness of its due desert, the sinner becomes an anxious inquirer about the way of life ; when, like the Philippian jailor, with all the earnestness of an awakened spirit, he cries out, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved ?" Now, while there are differences in the experience of those who by grace have been brought to faith in Christ, while some are drawn with cords of a man, with bands of love, and while others are made to feel more the sense of guilt and danger from the terrors of the divine law, yet all who are led to accept Christ by faith have been made to feel their need of Him by a consciousness of guilt that could only be met by the blood of Christ's atoning sacrifice and the forgiving mercy of a sin-pardoning God. When the soul of the sinner has been awakened to a sense of guilt, when sin stands before his sight in all its evil and awful issues, what is the most blissful voice that can fall upon his ear ? Go, oh sinner, with all your guilt to Jesus. Go and tell Him all you need and all you feel. Cast your soul by faith

upon Jesus. There is salvation in Him for sinners, even the chief of sinners. "Neither is there salvation in any other ; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." His own special call falls upon your ears, and it is for you in all its tenderness of compassion and love. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Rise, then, oh sinner, He calleth thee. "*Go and tell Jesus.*"

Often the sinner, awakened to a sense of sin and anxious about his soul's state before God, is much perplexed and in trouble. He has the command to cast himself upon the Saviour, but he stands back from Him, because his heart, he feels, is so hard ; because he thinks himself so great a sinner that there can be no mercy for him ; because he cannot grieve for his sins as he ought ; because he needs, as he imagines, still further conviction of sin. Oh, it would be well if the awakened sinner would go and tell all his case to Jesus. Jesus would teach him thus : that if ever he is to be saved, he must come as he is, with all his sin and guilt about him, and leave all by faith upon the Lord. He would teach him that there can be no broken heart mourning over sin till it has been touched by His grace and blood, through the influences of His blessed Spirit. Jesus would teach him that the mercy which met the grievous guilt of Manasseh, which subdued the hearts of Jerusalem's sinners to the obedience of faith, and the blood which washed the guilt of all their sin away, is sufficient for him. He would teach him that there is no guilt so great that His blood cannot pardon, no impurity so deep that His blood cannot remove, no bondage of sin so intense that His blood cannot unloose, no sinner so utterly depraved by sin that Christ's blood cannot restore. Jesus will teach him that

no sinner, however great his guilt, or hard his heart, or vicious his life, will ever fail of present and eternal salvation through Him, if he will only come now while it is the accepted time and day of salvation. Let then the anxious sinner "*go and tell Jesus.*"

II. GO AND TELL JESUS IF YOU HAVE FALLEN INTO SPIRITUAL DECLINE.—This is the course that must be taken by every professed follower of the Lord whose conscience has been awakened to a sense of sin through backsliding, or, it may be, has stained his Christian profession by some trespass which has openly dishonoured the Lord and brought reproach upon the Christian name. For need it be said, that unless Christian life in its fire and fervour be kept up by communion with God in the close intercourse of the closet, and in the careful regard of all the ordinances of divine grace, then will it be found that the pulses of spiritual life beat feebly, that the heart of spiritual life becomes cold, the affections arid and dead, and the man's heart will glide away into worldliness and the love of worldly pleasures; it will become absorbed in worldly pursuits and in the care for worldly things, and very soon may the man be found in the pathway of open transgression. If, then, the professor be conscious of spiritual decline, or has been guilty of open sin, through spiritual backsliding; if, through the seduction of the world and the temptation of the devil, he has erred from the way of holiness and gone aside into sin, let him not remain where he is, in all the darkness and defilement of spiritual decline and backsliding, but at once and with all the earnestness of a spirit that, conscious of guilt, seeks forgiveness of sin and grace for penitence and new obedience, let him go and tell Jesus. Never till he has gone and told Jesus, till he has anew taken hold of Him

by faith, and determined by His grace to walk in contrition of spirit and newness of life, will the light of the Lord's countenance shine upon him, and he have the conscious sense of peace and the experience "of the joy of God's salvation." Let his be the exercise of the Psalmist in the 51st Psalm; and that he may share the blessing of the Psalmist's penitence, "*Let him go and tell Jesus.*"

III. GO AND TELL JESUS IF YOU WISH FOR FURTHER EXPERIENCE OF DIVINE GRACE, FURTHER CONFORMITY TO THE SAVIOUR'S IMAGE, FURTHER USEFULNESS IN THE SAVIOUR'S CAUSE, FURTHER PREPAREDNESS FOR THE EVERLASTING REST. ---For all the believer's needs let him go and tell Jesus. Well does he already know that all his life and strength, and peace and joy, are in Him. All his life is in Christ, for he lives, not he, but Christ liveth in him. All his strength is out of Christ, for he is strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. He is only strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. All his peace is in Christ, for He is our peace, and hath made our peace through the blood of His cross, and gives all His people peace in believing. All his joy is in Christ, and hence he rejoices in the Lord alway, and finds the joy of the Lord to be his strength. Whatever a Christian man needs to make him more meek and loving, more heavenly-minded and happy, more useful in the cause of Christ, and more a blessing to all around him, is to be found by him only in Christ. And hence, conscious of his weakness and insufficiency for the work and warfare of Christian life, let him day by day lay all before Jesus. "*Let him go and tell Jesus.*"

IV. GO AND TELL JESUS THE NEED YOU HAVE OF HIS HELP IN THE DAY OF ARDUOUS DUTY.—Christian life has

its warp and its woof made up of duty and trial. The moment any man takes hold of Christ by the hand of faith, that moment he becomes His willing servant, and engages to render obedience to Him as his Master and Lord. Now this service of Christ tells of self-denying, self-sacrificing obedience. The very first step of it is a step of self-denial. No man can take up the cross and follow Christ in the way of holy obedience and humble service, without the practical remembrance of the words of the Master: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Christian life commences with the arduous duty of self-denial,—with the denial of sinful self. The Christian gives up his self-will, and becomes submissive to the will of Christ. He casts aside all self-righteousness, and rests wholly and humbly on the righteousness of Christ. He parts from all self-dependence, and leans entirely on the grace of Christ. He gives up all self-wisdom, that he may be led and guided by the word and spirit of Christ. He leaves all self-seeking and self-glory, that he may live and labour for the glory of Christ. Now, it will be clearly seen that in all this duty, this arduous duty of daily self-denial, there is especial need of the aid of divine grace. No man can regard this daily duty of the Christian life without the help of the Lord. And what more cheering to his spirit than the thought that he can go and tell all his insufficiency to Jesus, who is a very present help in the time of need?

This self-denial in its exercise may scarcely come within the region of the consciousness of many, because they fail to exercise it in the small things of life, and think that the day of arduous duty only comes when some great work is to be done for the Master, or when some sinful course to be resisted is set before the soul.

Now, to deny ourselves some great ungodliness or some special worldly lust, say the lust of ill-gotten gain, which may fill the page of a newspaper and send men to the prison, is not that part of the duty of self-denial which a Christian man is apt to forget, or where he is most likely to fail. It is rather in those things which the world around him may esteem of little moment,—which do not bulk in the eyes of men, but which yet tell so materially upon the power of spiritual life. Here is some little quirk in business—some course that scarcely squares with the law of thorough uprightness—some shift which conscience cannot approve. It is here, more than in the great things which demand our regard, that you find the region for the arduous duty of Christian self-denial. Here is one who fails in control over his spirit—who neglects to set a watch before his mouth, and to keep the door of his lips. Here is another that gives way to temper and passion—and another who turns back from the right path through fear of ridicule. Then, on the other hand, here is one who is fond of doubtful amusements—here another who is weak to resist the cravings of depraved appetite—and here another who may find himself in a doubtful place or following a doubtful course, though it tell upon the progress of religion in his soul. Now all these come within the region of daily self-denial. And let me say that the man who would be faithful to Christ and faithful to his soul's eternal well-being will feel that in this arduous duty of daily self-denial he needs the grace and help of Christ, that faithfully he may deny himself whatever is hurtful to his spiritual life, that he may be enabled in all he does to please the Master and be profitable to men. And so also in regard to the full measure of holy obedience, lest there be any defect in service or neglect

of the duty which the Lord enjoins. For would it not be a sad rebuke to any of His servants if the Lord should say to him, "One thing thou lackest"? What need then that we lay all our case of weakness and insufficiency before the Lord, that we may receive from Him the aids of His grace and Spirit lest we fail in self-denial and service—lest we leave any part of duty undone, or any part of Christ's will forgotten. To do it would be disloyalty to the Master. It would be dishonouring to the Christian name. For the work of self-denial, of faithful Christian service, let us go then to the Lord. Let the Christian man tell Him that he feels how true are the Master's own words, "Without me ye can do nothing,"—that he is conscious of his weakness, and that he casts himself wholly by faith for help upon the Saviour's grace and strength. Let him "*go and tell Jesus.*"

V. GO AND TELL JESUS THE NEED YOU HAVE OF HIS STRENGTH FOR CONFLICT WITH TEMPTATION.—Temptation signifies trial, and in this sense it is used when God is said to have tempted Abraham, *i.e.* put him to the proof when he called upon him to sacrifice his son Isaac. In this sense everything that comes in contact with a man tries him, puts him to the proof, makes manifest the principle that is in him. It reveals day by day the Christian man's temper, disposition, and character. It tells his faith, love, and obedience to God. It shows whether or not he will obey God in the face of all difficulties and enemies, of all adversities and tribulations. But temptation in Scripture generally brings before us those enticements to sin which Satan makes use of to ensnare the soul. There are some who deny Satan's existence and condemn his influence. The word of God sets forth his personality, and ascribes to him power over

the souls of men—a controlling power in the children of disobedience, while he exerts his influence to seduce and harass the children of God, and impede their progress in the divine life. The whole of Satan's power is exerted against the advancement of the Saviour's kingdom. With this view he promotes error, blinds the minds of men to the simplicity and glory of divine truth, and especially to the doctrines of divine grace, fosters unbelief, excites evil passions, tempts to sin, as in the case of Judas and Ananias, and leads men, as in the case of Judas, to remorse and despair.

Now the temptations of Satan approach the soul at all angles. He can tempt through the world, which presents natural objects to our affections and desires. He can set forth its wealth, its honours, its pleasures for our pursuit, and lead men to take ungodly ways and follow dishonest practices to secure them. If they will not conform to the low standard of the world's morality, he can threaten to hold them up to contempt and ridicule, to persecution and hatred. He commends the loose principles and approves the example of the ungodly; applauds their earnest pursuit of the world's pleasures; condemns those who would testify against them as lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; abuses those who seek to be faithful to Christ as singular, and brands them with some name of reproach that he may make them the scoff of worldly men. Then, through the corrupt heart, by the desires and appetites of the body, how does he tempt men to gluttony and drunkenness, to sensuality and vice, and by their evil dispositions to pride and vanity, to envy, malice, and revenge! Nor are his temptations to be lightly esteemed or little regarded. Fully acquainted through long experience of dealing with the human heart, he knows how to adapt

his temptations to particular times of life—to youth, manhood, and age,—to particular seasons of prosperity and adversity,—to particular circumstances of a man's family and business, so as to bring him to listen to his seductions, and harass if not ruin his soul.

Now when temptation assails you there is no voice that can more fitly fall upon your ear than this, "*Go and tell Jesus.*" You can tell Him wherever you are, or in whatever place you may be found. In the house or by the way, the soul can at once rise up in prayer to the throne. And ever remember that there is need of watchfulness and prayer and close walk with God, if you would avoid the danger of entering on temptation. For temptation is not entered upon when the man has, by some special overt act of sin through the enticement of Satan, fallen into reproach and snare of the devil. The temptation probably was entered on long before. It was entered upon that day when the man did not follow the voice of conscience in regard to some act of self-denial for Christ, when he yielded to take some doubtful step in business, to go to some place of doubtful amusement, when he gave way to some sinful indulgence, when he was led to neglect some religious duty, to trifle with some occasion of sin. Some years ago the embankment of the supply of the water for the town of Sheffield gave way, and the whole of the collected volume of water swept through the town, carrying along with it devastation and death. But the danger did not first appear with the yielding of the embankment. It was manifest from the moment that the inspector saw the first slight dropping of water through the masonry which retained the supply. Just so is it here. And hence the danger is not simply by temptation to some heinous transgression that startles the conscience, but

the fearful danger is through the temptation to some trivial compliance, to what men might call some slight trespass, to some slight neglect of duty which prepares the soul for the commission of the greatest sin. Do not then estimate as of little moment what men would call trivial trespasses, trivial neglects, trivial compliances with worldly customs and ways. They smooth the path to the most startling and awful transgressions. Whenever the slightest temptation comes, "*Go and tell Jesus.*" Seek His grace to resist what men would reckon the small, and thereby through grace you will be the more able to conflict with all temptation. "*Go and tell Jesus.*"

VI. GO AND TELL JESUS THE NEED YOU HAVE OF HIS PRESENCE FOR COMFORT IN THE TIME OF WORLDLY DISASTER.—The world and the things of the world are but a poor portion for a man's soul. In regard to all worldly possessions, they lack the two main elements which can make any portion valuable to an immortal nature. They lack the element of assured continuance, and then, next, they cannot give substantial happiness to the soul. The wealth of the world is a very precarious possession, on which no man need set his heart, and which no Christian man can ever regard as his portion, and everything connected with the world and time is just as precarious as the world itself. Worldly friends are like the shadow on the sundial, which appears when the sun shines, and departs in the presence of the smallest cloud. They are a kind of thermometer by which men may know the world's feeling respecting them. Lay no stress on mere worldly friendships. And not less delusive are mere worldly hopes and prospects—just

“ Like the snowflake on the river,
A moment white, then melts for ever.”

There is ever need to remember what the Word of God affirms, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord."

While diligence in a lawful calling is duty to Christ, yet, with all the diligence which a man may exercise, still for wise reasons the blessing of temporal abundance may be withheld. He may be made to feel the pressure of straitened circumstances. Nay, in a single moment, by a single stroke in Providence, and irrespectively of any act of his own, he may be brought from affluence to poverty, and be made to suffer under the heavy load of disaster and distress. How many often have been made poor in a day, lost the fruits of all their diligence in business for a lifetime, and that too in old age, when ill able to meet the winter blast of adversity and distress.

Now, what more suited to their circumstances than the course here before us in our text—"*Go and tell Jesus.*" When the dark day of temporal calamity comes, go to Him with all the burden of your distress. When the sun of temporal prosperity sets, look up and see the stars of divine promise, which the dark night of adversity reveals, and keep your eye on heaven. Remember Him who is ever by your side, and in whose hand are all the circumstances of your earthly lot. "*Go and tell Jesus.*"

VII. GO AND TELL JESUS THE NEED YOU HAVE OF HIS PRESENCE FOR CONSOLATION AND COMFORT IN THE TIME OF PERSONAL AND RELATIVE AFFLICTION.—It has been said that a man's house is his castle, into which even the king cannot enter without the permission of the possessor. But though a man build himself a place of strength, and shut himself up within lofty walls and with massive iron

gates, all his works and bastions can never avail against the entrance of affliction, for it can overleap the loftiest wall and penetrate the strongest defence. Just as the man bears a conscience within him from which he cannot save himself by flight, so does he bear the presence of affliction in his nature, for it is as inseparable from sin as the shadow from the substance. Go where he may, hide himself where he may, affliction knows his hiding-place. He sits under its shadow, for "man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward."

Now, when affliction lays its hand upon his person, when it stretches him upon the bed of pain and languishing, when he has wearisome nights and troublesome days appointed him, when he is ready to say in the evening, Oh, when shall it be morning! and in the morning, Oh, when shall it be evening! when, like the Psalmist, he is weary of his groaning, when all night he maketh his bed to swim, when he watereth his couch with his tears, where can he find comfort for his afflicted spirit in the season when the frail tabernacle suffers under the pressure of physical distress?

Our text supplies the answer to the inquiry. Let him go and tell all his case to Jesus. It was distinctive of our blessed Lord while on earth, that He never turned a deaf ear to the prayer of the afflicted, or sent away any one uncomforted who in the time of trouble applied to Him for compassion and relief. Go then and tell all your affliction to Him. Make known all your need of His help to Him, when vain is the help of man. "*Go and tell Jesus.*"

And then, if you be sitting under the shadow of a great sorrow, because the Lord has laid His hand on some one near and dear to you—the husband or the wife of your bosom—the father or the mother whom you

reverence and love—the son or the daughter whom you cherish with the tenderest affection, and who is dear to you as the warm life's blood that beats in your heart—some child that has made your family joyous and your life happy—how then are you to obtain comfort in this your dark day of trial and sorrow? Go and unburden your heart before the Lord. Go and tell it all to Jesus. Nay, if God has smitten down the loved one by the hand of death, and you now sit in silence and solitude under the shadow of death's dark gloom, if your heart is sore as the voice of memory recalls all the bright remembrances and touching associations of the past, let thy bereavement, O child of sorrow, bear thee to the Lord. For thy well-being and comfort, that light may break forth upon thee out of the darkness, "*Go and tell Jesus.*"

VIII. GO AND TELL JESUS THE NEED YOU HAVE OF HIS GRACE AND STRENGTH AS YOU LOOK FORWARD TO THE COMING HOUR OF DEATH.—Death is the last event of earth's history, and cannot be divested of its dread solemnities. While in a world of sin, death is the condition of all life, and stands before us as the gate to a state of changeless being, and it must not be forgotten that it is the entrance either on everlasting happiness or woe. While to those who know not God and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ it is the door to punishment with everlasting destruction, to the humble believer in Christ it is the commencement of everlasting blessedness and glory. "The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory." Certain as the reward of grace is to all the Lord's people in virtue of the shedding of the Saviour's precious blood, yet no Christian man can pass

through the valley of the shadow of death either with safety or comfort, unless gladdened by the presence and strengthened by the grace of Him who was dead, and is now alive for evermore, and hath the keys of hell and of death. Nay, in view of it, there is no child of God who would ever think of the dark valley of the shadow of death, and of his passage through it to the light beyond, without thinking of Jesus. Ever as he looks forward to it, and while nature shrinks from contest with the last enemy, what is he to do with all his fears of the coming struggle, when the world and friends pass away from his view, and alone he goes to the conflict with death? The words of our text set forth the course that is fitted to fill his soul with comfort, and shed light over all the darkness of death and the grave. What time his heart is overwhelmed, that the Saviour may be with him with His all-sufficient grace and strength, he has only to "*Go and tell Jesus.*"

The words, "*Go and tell Jesus,*" are for all time. They are a special comfort to the believer's soul, and fitted to quicken and sustain him. Go and tell Jesus all your heart, all your sins and all your sorrow, all your joys and all your afflictions, all your hopes and all your fears, that you may be pardoned through His blood, sanctified by His Spirit, sustained by His grace, guided by His wisdom, comforted by the abundance of His consolations, and made meet for the enjoyment of His glory. "*Go and tell all to Jesus.*"

And these words are an especial command to every sinner. "*Go and tell all to Jesus.*" Go and tell your need of Him to Jesus. Go and tell Him all your guilt, and that you require His precious blood for your pardon. Go and tell Him all about your hard heart and your stubborn will, and seek the aid of His grace, that you may

accept Him as your Saviour, for without Him you are lost for ever. Go and tell Him now, for now only is the accepted time, and now only is the day of salvation. Nay, let it be yours to essay faith in Him, now in dependence upon His grace, while you tell Him the need which He only can supply. If you would be saved now with an everlasting salvation and blessed throughout eternal ages, "*Go and tell Jesus.*" Amen.

X.

THE GETHSEMANE AGONY.

“And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”—LUKE xxii. 44.

LEAVING Jerusalem by Stephen's Gate, on the eastern side of that city whose every foot of earth has a history, the traveller descends by a rocky path the steep side of the valley of Jehoshaphat, and at last reaches the brook Kedron, that winds its devious way through the rugged ravine. As he stands on an old bridge that crosses that brook and gazes around, there is much before him to attract his eye and to interest his spirit. Turning to the city he has left, there on the precipitous slope above him is Mount Moriah, where Abraham raised an altar to sacrifice his son, and where, many a century after, Solomon raised his temple to the God of Israel. What a history does that mount furnish, alike in the development of providence and grace! Thrones have crumbled beside it. Nations of the world have warred around it. God has dwelt on it in the visible symbol of His glory, and there incarnate Deity was revealed. As the traveller turns to the east, there rises up before his eye the gentle slope of the Mount of Olives, and there over it the road to Bethany, and instantly, amid the rush of recollections which the scene has awakened, does the mind dwell

with interest on the remembrance that over that road the Saviour frequently passed with His disciples to the house of Mary and Martha; that on the top of that mount He poured forth tears of warm yet sorrowful affection for the sinning city of Jerusalem, which God had destined to destruction; and from it, having blessed His disciples, He departed unto heaven. From that old bridge over the Kedron, wherever he casts his eye, the traveller beholds some object pregnant with the memories of the past,—memories of a world-wide interest,—memories that are inseparably associated with the well-being of mankind.

Standing upon that bridge that crosses the Kedron, there is one object that, even to this hour, remains to attract the eye of the traveller and to arrest his spirit, in the midst of a scene where every step awakens the echoes of the past. Near to him, as he gazes down that valley to the south, is the Garden of Gethsemane—a spot of entire seclusion overhung by the Mount of Olives, the heights of Jehoshaphat, and the walls of Jerusalem. Away from the busy hum of the city, its silence only broken by the bubbling brook that winded down the vale, that garden was frequently during our Lord's life a place to Him of retirement and prayer. Tradition says that it was the property of the Virgin Mary by hereditary succession, and near to it is her reputed grave. It was our Lord's especial retreat. There it is, after the lapse of centuries,—eighteen centuries,—now enclosed by a wall of rough, loose stones, and within it eight olive trees, with roots gnarled and time-worn, probably the most aged in the world. Their large trunks, much decayed, with small tops of foliage, still survive the flight probably of two thousand years. There is little doubt that these mark the scene of that strange agony, to which our text here before us directs our attention, and point out the

spot to the Christian traveller, which ever must be one of the most interesting on earth.

Our Lord, having eaten the passover with His disciples, and instituted the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, designed to hold His death during all time in perpetual remembrance, went forth, as we are told in the preceding context, from the upper room where they had kept the passover. He left the city of Jerusalem. It was evening when He sat down with His twelve disciples to eat the passover, and now cold and dewy night encompasses the scene. Going forth by Stephen's Gate with His disciples, they wend their way down the steep declivity of the valley of Jehoshaphat. They pass the brook Kedron by its bridge, which still remains a striking memorial of the past, and come near to the Garden of Gethsemane at the foot of the Mount of Olives. Taking with Him Peter, James, and John, the Saviour enters the garden, saying to the other disciples, "Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder." He advances with His three disciples into the darkness of the overshadowing olives. There He began to be sorrowful and very heavy. He says unto His accompanying disciples, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death: tarry ye here and watch with me." Retiring to a little distance from them, He fell on His face and prayed, saying, "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done." He had prayed. His prayer, while it breathed submission, was yet the utterance of sore distress. It told His need of strength. There appeared an angel from heaven, strengthening Him. He is strengthened, but His sorrow is not lessened. His trial still continues. Hence by the light of our text we behold Him in agony—"And being in agony."

Cold and dewy night reigns in silence over the Garden of Gethsemane. Not a breath of the breeze whispers through the olives. All is still. The Kedron murmurs through the vale. It is nature's hour of rest. What a contrast is all this to the troubled soul!—the agonized spirit that there in that human form of the Son of man, under the overspreading olives in the Garden of Gethsemane, offers up to God prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears. All nature reposes. He is in agony. Quiet rests on the landscape. There is no quiet in His perturbed and sorrowful soul. His disciples partake not in His distress. We find from the 45th verse that they were sleeping for sorrow. Their sorrow weighed down their eyelids, and steeped their senses in forgetfulness. The Saviour treads the winepress alone, for, while He is in agony, His disciples are asleep. While they sleep He is in agony,—“*and being in an agony.*”

Gethsemane is thus the record of a singular scene. It notes a singular page in our Saviour's history. We have marked its external circumstances. Let us now more narrowly inspect it. In doing so we shall notice—I. The Saviour's agony; II. The Saviour's exercise. “*And being in an agony.*”

I. THE SAVIOUR'S AGONY.—“*Being in an agony.*” The word here used expresses the idea of sore conflict of soul. It is borrowed from a scene where a man fights or runs or wrestles with an antagonist for a prize. The contest of the Olympic games of Greece, in which men strove for the mastery with the utmost straining of all their physical powers, was called an agony, and the place of contest the place of agony. Borrowing, then, this expression, of all others the most indicative of sore

physical conflict, the sacred writer here applies it to the Saviour's soul—to His sore conflict of spirit. "*Being in an agony.*"

What, then, was the *cause* and *character* of this agony which the Garden of Gethsemane beheld? Now here we enter upon ground where it becomes us to tread with reverence, and only to proceed whither the light of Scripture may bear us. Gethsemane and Calvary are not scenes for idle speculation or imaginative description. He who comes within the reach of them is bound to remember that they are to be contemplated only by the light which themselves reveal, and only with that chastened reverence of spirit which becomes the sight of their dreadful and mysterious suffering. The words of the Lord to Moses, when he drew near to gaze upon the bush burning yet unconsumed by the flame, ought to be present to our minds whenever we approach Gethsemane and Calvary: "Put thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." We would notice, then—

1. *The cause of the Saviour's agony.* And here we would remark—

(1) *The Saviour's agony in Gethsemane proceeded from Divine Desertion.* There, in that garden, while in the exercise of prayer, God hid His face of love from Him. He deserted Him. When we speak of divine desertion we do not mean that God ceases to be omnipresent, or that the Garden of Gethsemane became the spot in the vast universe from which the presence of the Deity was excluded. When we speak of divine desertion we do not speak of the great God ceasing to be essentially present, but only as withdrawing the sense of His loving presence, His hiding from the soul His face of favour and love. Let God withdraw from any soul His favour which is life,

and His loving-kindness which is better than life, and there you have a case of spiritual desertion. This desertion to a sinner's soul is death. It is here, to the Saviour, sore soul-distress.

If, then, it be asked why this desertion by God,—why this hiding of His countenance from His own Son in the Garden of Gethsemane,—we have still further to state some things which are needed to explain the marvellous occurrence. Desertion by God may either be admonitory, correctional, experimental, or penal. Desertion by God may be admonitory, when, for instance, God hides His face from a believer to keep him from sin. It may be correctional when God's face is hidden from him to chastise him for his transgression. It may be experimental, when it occurs for the purpose of trying a believer's faith, and preparing him to engage in important duty. It is penal, however, when it is truly and properly the just desert of sin.

Now look at desertion in the case of Christ. It could not in His case be either admonitory of duty, or correctional of transgression, or experimental of faith. Be it remembered there was no imperfection in the Saviour's nature. There was no defect in His character. Sin was not inherent in His soul. There is therefore only one sense in which God could desert Him,—only one light in which we can view His desertion, and that is as a penal infliction by God, as the just desert of sin.

Here, then, we come to the explanation of the Saviour's agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. He is deserted by God, and this desertion is a penal infliction on Him as the substitute of sinners. You are well aware that there could be no penal infliction if there was no guilt. But what is guilt? It is liability to punishment on account of sin, and is either inherent or imputed. Inherent guilt is

liability to punishment on account of personal trespass. Imputed guilt is liability to punishment on account of the trespasses of others laid to the charge of one who, inherently or personally, is free of their guilt. Look then at the Saviour, the Lord Jesus. You find in Him no inherent or personal guilt. "He is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." Look to His character, and in it you find the full-orbed glory of infinite perfection, free from shortcoming and unstained by sin. While, however, He has no personal or inherent guilt, there must be guilt there, for there cannot be penal infliction without guilt. Need I tell you that there, on His person, you find the burden of imputed guilt. As the substitute and surety of His people He took upon Him their guilt, that He might bear its punishment. God made to meet on His head, says the prophet, the iniquities of us all. God imputed our guilt to Him; reckoned it to His account, and thus He must bear the burden of its punishment. Thus it is that in the Garden of Gethsemane God hides His face from Him, and He is troubled. The guilt of sinners is upon Him. He nears the hour of its expiation. The sinner's guilt had been contracted by deserting God, and hence, as is the sin, so is the punishment, a soul deserted by God. Nay, it was fitting, as we shall see, that Christ should meet the hour of expiation of sin's guilt on Calvary in the full consciousness of all that it involved, and therefore the heaven is curtained with sackcloth, and the face of God's favour and love, which had been the sunshine of His soul, is withdrawn; and hence, in the Garden of Gethsemane, His soul deserted is a soul in agony.

(2) *The Saviour's agony in Gethsemane proceeded from a sense of the wrath of God and of the soreness of the sufferings which He was about to undergo in order to the*

completion of the work of human redemption. Desertion by God, while a part of the penal infliction due for man's transgression, was not the sole cause of the Saviour's agony in the garden of Gethsemane. The Saviour was deserted that a lively apprehension of the wrath of God, ere long to be poured out upon Him, might be impressed upon His soul. The flash of the lightning could not come from a sky of sunshine. The overcast heaven is needed to the crashing voice of the thunder. It was thus necessary that God's face of favour and love should be hidden from Him, that, amidst the darkness of a God-deserted soul, He might have some realizing consciousness of what was in that bitter cup of wrath which the day after He had to drink, as Heaven's appointed victim and the sinner's substitute on the cross at Calvary.

It was this, then, that caused the Saviour's agony in Gethsemane — the cup of suffering on the morrow, a sense of the bitterness of which overwhelmed His soul. This cup had ever been before His eye. Never during His pilgrimage on earth had He forgotten it. He had analyzed its elements. It had ever been consciously present to His soul. When He spake of it, His language shaped itself into this expressive utterance: "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" Even this very evening, ere He left the upper room for the Garden of Gethsemane, it formed the special matter of His valedictory address. Now, however, under the spiritual midnight of His soul, a soul deserted by God, He has got a sight of what that cup of suffering contained which He never had before—a sight especially of the wrath of God due to Him, as the substitute and surety of guilty men, so awful and overwhelming that His human nature was

almost ready to sink at the prospect of that cup of bitterness so near—and “*His soul is in an agony.*”

This, then, was the cause of the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Saviour’s sorrow and amazement of soul arose from a near and realizing view of that cup of suffering, and especially of divine wrath, which had been given Him to drink. God in the Garden of Gethsemane, as it were, put that cup into His hands. It filled the soul of the Saviour as He took it with an awful and oppressive dread. The terrible sight of its wrath overwhelmed Him. Under the darkening heaven of a soul deserted by God, the fiery gleam of God’s flashing sword of justice made His feeble human nature shrink at the prospect before Him. As the Substitute and Surety of sinners must He bear all this? Must He undergo the wrath and curse of God? It is taking hold of Him. Nay, He is taking hold of it, and the sight of it is so awful that “*His soul is in agony.*”

Such was the cause of the Saviour’s agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. Let us now notice—

2. *The character of the Saviour’s agony.* And here we observe—

(1) *It was spiritual distress.* It was agony of soul. I deny not that there was sore physical distress, but it was the effect of that mental anguish with which the Saviour was oppressed. As yet no human hand had reached Him. He was in solitude and silence. His agony thus is not traceable to physical pain, but to soul sorrow. “His soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.”

Be it observed, however, that this agony of soul, this spiritual distress, requires a word of explanation, lest we fall into error. While the agony of the Saviour was caused by sin, it was not the agony of a sinner. While it arose from a lively, near, and realizing sense of God’s

wrath about to descend upon Him, as the substitute of sinners, it had nothing in it of the agony of a sinner's soul. Under a sense of guilt a sin-burdened conscience has often been agonized by the pangs of remorse. There are death-beds where an awakened conscience and a despairing soul have shaken the sinner with the premonitions of eternal despair, and remorse has hunted the man in agony into the eternal world. Remorse, be it remembered, however, is the effect of personal transgression. It is something which a holy nature can never feel. The agony of the Saviour had in it no element of remorse. He had no sin in His heart or life, and thus He could have no share in its purely personal experiences. As He could not be visited by remorse, so neither could He be the subject of despair. The guilt of sin, however, was on Him, and thus the wrath of God was on Him. The temptation of devils beset Him. The fury of man was against Him. All that the punishment of guilt could bring down upon a holy nature was to be borne by Him. This to His pure soul was the cause of spiritual distress. It filled His soul with agony.

(2) *It was severe distress.* The narrative of the evangelists fully indicates how sore was the Saviour's agony of soul. Matthew says, "He began to be sorrowful and very heavy." Mark says, "He began to be amazed and very heavy." Luke here says, "Being in an agony." These are historical delineations of sorrow which language feels burdened to express. And then the Saviour's own utterance most clearly reveals His mental anguish. He says, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." A sorrow which is burdened with the weight of death, a sorrow under which the spirit had got hold of the pains of death, is a sorrow inconceivable in the measure of its woe. It is something of which we can only have

the faintest conception, and which human language can never adequately describe.

There is one aspect of the agony which we can in some degree measure. We can appreciate the visible and the sensible, and thus can comprehend its severity by its effects on the Saviour's physical frame. Under the influence of His sore conflict of soul, "His sweat," we are told, "was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground." Is it possible to tell the agony of a soul that wrings from the body it inhabits a perspiration of blood. In a cold night (for in the high priest's house they will ere long need a fire to warm themselves) the Saviour's soul-sorrow so affects Him that there rain from His suffering frame great drops of blood. It was no common agony, no ordinary distress, that caused such unwonted physical effects in the Garden of Gethsemane, amidst all the coldness of the midnight hour. The word of God records it that we may learn from it that the Saviour's mental conflict was soul-sorrow indeed. It was "*an agony*."

(3) *It was preparatory distress.* This agony of the Saviour was not the agony of the cross. But the design of the agony whereby the Saviour had, as it were, a foretaste of the cross ere He reached it, was that He might know by some measure of experience ere He bore the cross what were the elements of that cup of trembling which there it became Him as the sinner's substitute to drink. Had this scene in Gethsemane never occurred, He could not as man have known, ere the cross was reached by Him, what was the awful, the overwhelming agony which it involved. As God He knew all the sufferings of the cross, but it was needful that He should know as man, as God-Man, by experience in some measure what the sufferings of the cross should be,

that with a full consciousness of what was before Him, with a realizing sense of it, He might take into His hand the cup of trembling which on the morrow He should drink to the dregs. When Christ went forth from the Garden of Gethsemane, when He said to His disciples, "Rise, let us be going: he that betrayeth me is at hand," He went forth experimentally conscious of what suffering as man, as God-Man, He had to endure for man's redemption. As man, He could only know the cross by enduring it, or by such a realizing apprehension of it as should make its sufferings perceptibly present to His soul. In Gethsemane the sufferings of the cross were set palpably before Him. God, as it were, spread out the cross before His eye. He then saw and felt what the cross meant. It was all before Him. The sight and experience filled His soul with agony.

Now it is just at this stage of our Saviour's history, and as after this agony He leaves the Garden of Gethsemane, that we have before us all the elements that make His love for the souls of men so wondrous, and that so eminently display the freeness of His vicarious sacrifice. Before the scene of Gethsemane the Saviour had to learn as man what the cross meant. The lesson filled His soul with agony, and made Him sweat great drops of blood. When He came forth from the Garden of Gethsemane, He knew by experience what the cross should be. He learnt it in that garden. There "the pains of hell got hold on Him, He found trouble and sorrow." There was yet opportunity to refuse the cup and leave mankind to ruin. Great as the agony of the cross may be, if He still choose it, He does not now choose unconscious of what it means. He cannot say that He did not know until He went to the cross the inconceivable measure of its suffering. No, He has learnt all in Geth-

semane. As, then, He goes forth from that garden, it is in the fullest consciousness of its awful character, of its dreadful suffering; yet with a heart burning for human salvation, unmoved from its purpose by all the preparatory suffering of Gethsemane, He goes forth freely, with the whole consent of His will and heart, to deliver Himself up into the hands of wicked men, that He might be crucified and slain. With a heart yet scarcely free from the experience of divine wrath, with a body yet feeling the effects of the sore soul-conflict, He says to His disciples, "Rise, let us be going," and He goes forth to be led as a lamb to the slaughter. Here you see the choice of the cross in freest voluntariness and with the fullest consciousness of what it meant in its sufferings and sorrows, and here also you have the manifestation of a love that is far stronger than death. It is not necessary to tell that this free choice of the cross, after experience of its suffering, enters into the very essence of Christ's atoning sacrifice. It was the special end of the Saviour's Gethsemane agony.

II. THE SAVIOUR'S EXERCISE.—"*Being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly.*" Properly viewed, the exercise of the Saviour was a part of His agony. His labour and earnestness in prayer must be added to the soul-conflict. Let us see, then, what was the matter of His prayer, what the manner and what the issue.

1. *The matter of His prayer.* In no case when the Saviour prayed did He require, as we do, to address God's throne in the words of confession or penitence. Confession and penitence are the exercise of a soul that has sinned. The Saviour's prayer was a petition. "He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears."

The matter of His prayer is not unlike that of the prayer presented in the hearing of His disciples: "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee." He says, "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but Thine, be done."

(1) *You will thus notice that the undertone of the prayer is for support under His sufferings, that He might bear them.* The Saviour does not pray that the cup of suffering might be withdrawn from Him. The sense of its dreadful anguish made His human nature shrink from it, but He knew the will of God respecting His sufferings, and even while His human nature shrinks, He is submissive to the will of God, He desires to do His Father's will and to finish His work. His prayer thus is not a prayer to be freed from suffering, but to be sustained under it. He never faltered for one moment in His purpose to suffer, but He feared lest He should be overcome of death. "He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared." On an immediate and realizing view of death, as attended with the wrath and curse of God, He had such deep and dreadful apprehensions of it, He felt how unable the human nature was to undergo it and prevail against it if not mightily supported and carried through it by the power of God, that He prayed that He might be freed from the absolute prevalence of it, that He might not be cast in the trial, and "He was heard and delivered in the thing He feared." He prayed thus that He might have strength to do the will of God, that He might not sink under His sufferings. His human nature without divine help was insufficient for the trial. He prayed, and He was heard. He was sustained by the Divine Spirit,

and by the Divine Spirit, called in Hebrews "the Eternal Spirit," He offered Himself unto God on Calvary. He prayed, and He was heard.

(2) *The prayer respected the glory of the divine name, that God's will might be accomplished, that God's purpose in His sufferings might be attained by the advancement of the divine glory in the salvation of those to be redeemed by His atoning death.* On this death both God's glory and man's salvation were dependent. If the Saviour fail, both must suffer the eclipse of darkness for evermore. The song of salvation will never be raised to God, and sinners must be consigned to eternal woe. God's glory was dear to the Saviour's heart. The salvation of man was the joy set before Him. To accomplish this work which involved both, though it should bear Him to all the agony of the cross, is the burning desire of His loving spirit, and hence, "being in an agony, He prayed the more earnestly."

2. *The manner of His prayer.* "*He prayed the more earnestly.*" Earnestness arises in the heart from a consciousness of the value of any object, and from a sense of the consequence involved in securing it. Both these elements of earnestness were fully present in the Saviour's soul. Conscious, oh, how enlightenedly conscious was He of the value of the salvation of the souls of men! How conscious was He of the awful consequences of failure in the work of salvation, and thus how earnest was His prayer! In that Garden of Gethsemane, under the overspreading olives, there is at once present to His soul, on the one hand, His people and their deliverance, and, on the other hand, the awful course of suffering through which He must pass ere their redemption could be secured, and, feeling how much was involved in the issue, "being in an agony, He prayed the more earnestly."

The Saviour's earnestness also arose from a sense of the need He had of the divine help to do God's will in this great trial. Though He was God-Man, He needed divine help. He was dependent on God as man, and in Him He trusted. It was by the help of the Divine Spirit He went forth to do all the work of human redemption; for this purpose the Spirit rested on Him and was given Him without measure. Here, then, as the whole scene of suffering rises up before His eye,—as His heart is filled with a realizing sense of the overwhelming importance of the issue of the contest on which He is about to enter,—as His Spirit takes in all that the conflict involved,—all, as it bore on God's glory, on man's salvation, on all God's purposes and providences, on all the past history of the world and the future of eternity, with the full consciousness that divine help was needed to bear Him up and through the trial, need we wonder that "*being in an agony He prayed the more earnestly*"?

3. *The issue of His prayer.* His prayer was heard. He offered up His prayers with His blood. The blood fell in great drops from His body to the ground. His infinitely meritorious blood was offered with His prayers—prayers which, as the great High Priest of His people, He offered unto God, and the two together were effective of an answer. He was heard and answered. He had prayed for sustaining strength under His sufferings, that He might bring the work of God to a successful issue, that He might not fail, that He might bring forth judgment unto victory. He obtained the help He sought. This was the issue of the prayer He offered when "*being in an agony He prayed the more earnestly.*"

We have thus, from this passage of Scripture, brought before you the Saviour's agony in the Garden of Gethsemane and the Saviour's exercise.

IN CONCLUSION. *Let us mark the greatness of Christ's sufferings for sinners.* The foresight of them here fills the Saviour's soul with intensest agony. He is sore amazed and very heavy. The agony which a realizing sense of the wrath of God produces covers His body with a sweat of blood, and causes it to fall in great drops to the ground. Such was the agony which the Saviour experienced on a sight of the cross. Think what was the cross itself. You cannot tell its immeasurable anguish. There is a depth of soul-suffering and sorrow in the words, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" as they yet fall upon our ear from amidst all the darkness that surrounds the cross, which finite minds can never fathom nor human imagination conceive. Think not that the cross bears any special resemblance to the martyr's stake. The Saviour never left any martyr to pass through the fires alone. But "He trod the winepress alone, and of the people there were none with Him." The darkened heavens were only emblematic of the deeper darkness that desolated His soul by the desertion of God while He bore the burden of His wrath. Why all this suffering and anguish? It is the due desert and punishment of sin. All had to be borne by Him, or sinners must have been lost for ever. Yes, the Saviour bore it all, though it oppressed His holy soul with an awful agony.

And then it becomes us to measure the Saviour's love to the souls of men by this scene of agony. Here in the Garden of Gethsemane the Saviour, as God-Man, had learned what lay before Him on the cross. He had stood, as it were, beside the glowing furnace of the wrath of God and contemplated the flame. The sight filled His soul with the sorest anguish. It was no slight love that underwent the ordeal of this trial, and yet

left Him resolute to pass through the furnace and endure its burning. Human love, mere human love, would have sunk under it. It caused the Saviour sore soul-conflict, but His love overmastered all the prospect of the suffering. It bore Him to the cross. It bore Him through its agony. The salvation of sinners, the way that was set before Him, led Him to endure the cross, despising the shame. You can never sound the infinite affection of Christ's heart for sinners. He loved them with a love stronger than death, even the death of the cross.

But while Christ prayed that He might accomplish the salvation of sinners, does not this say that they should also pray for it? If He agonized to save them, should they not agonize to enter into the strait gate and experience the blessings of His salvation? How ought they to pray that they may be led to experience mercy through Him! For need I say that here in this scene you get a side-light shed upon the future state of those who turn away from Christ and reject the gospel of the grace of God? Sin is a leaving of God, and sin's punishment is a soul left by God. The eternal loss of God's love, the eternal desertion of the soul by God, and the eternal infliction of divine wrath, compose the main elements of the soul's eternal death in that place where hope is for ever gone, and where is nought but the experience of agony.

O believer, give thanks to God that by Christ you have been brought to the experience of divine grace, that God through Him has now returned to your once deserted soul. On the day of effectual calling, when, through Christ, the Spirit entered your heart by faith, you once more was restored to God, and God was restored to His seat in the temple of your heart, there to make His eternal dwelling-place. Remember that while God may hide

His face from you, His desertion of you can never be penal. All that was penal in desertion Christ bore as the due desert and punishment of your sin. If He hide His face, then it is only to lead you as a loving Father to turn more earnestly to Himself. Seek to know why He so deals with you, and with earnest hearts be it yours to turn to the Lord.

And now to-day, in the view of the Lord's Supper, see that your eye be fixed on Him who bore the agony of Gethsemane and the cross of Calvary for your soul's redemption and salvation, that with lively faith and reciprocal love you may draw near to Him at His table—a table that points to the scene of this Gethsemane conflict and Calvary crucifixion and death, telling to you, and through all the ages till He Himself do come, that you are redeemed from sin and death and hell, and made heirs of the inheritance of eternal life, because He was in an agony. Amen

XI.

CHRIST ENDURED THE CROSS, DESPISING THE SHAME.

“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith ; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”—HEB. xii. 2.

IT is recorded of a great warrior of France, that after his death his fellow-soldiers would not allow his name to be taken from the rolls. It was regularly called, and one as regularly answered for the departed warrior, “Dead on the field.” The preceding chapter of this epistle from which our text is taken does for the names there recorded what his comrades did for the soldier whose deeds of valour they had witnessed and whose memory they revered. The chapter is a roll-call of the dead. It is the muster-roll of a band of soldiers that will not allow death to blot their names from its page. It is the register of warriors who have won honourable graves and long-abiding victories. It is the record of those heroes on the battlefield of faith, who have died in a holy cause, and who now live in the annals of a spotless fame. Their lives were patterns, and their deeds incentives to a right-hearted emulation and a noble ambition. It may be said of all of them, as it is said of one of them, “He, being dead, yet speaketh.”

The saints whose names are recorded in the preceding

chapter died upon the field of faith. They died in harness. They died fighting. Death, however, was not defeat. They fell in triumph. Their death was their victory. Nor, though now no longer on the scene of contest, are they uninterested in the struggles of the battlefield they have left. True, they have gone where no foe can assail them—where no trial can afflict them—where death can never visit them—where they can have no more experience of the tribulations of time. They are, however, still the interested spectators of the scene of warfare, the witnesses of the soldiers still upon the field, with eye intent on their daring prowess and their high achievements. They have gained the victory, but their hearts are still with those and their eyes are still on those who are eager in the strife.

Such is the truth set forth in the commencement of this same chapter from which our text is taken. Comparing the contest of Christian faith to a race, and the Christian man to one who runs for the prize which awaits him at the goal, the word of God here surrounds him with a great cloud of witnesses—the redeemed in glory, who mayhap are the spectators of his arduous struggle, who themselves have reached the goal, and have been crowned with the wreath of successful contest. What an incentive to ardour is the thought of their success! How inspiring the eager interest and the watchful gaze of the glorious assemblage—that heaven should lend the eyes of its redeemed to be the witnesses of the Christian man's struggle in this scene of strife! The deeds of the warrior can make even the coward brave. The presence of a sympathizing multitude has often evoked a spirit of heroism that rose superior to difficulty, and carried the combatant undaunted over the field of death. This book, the record of faith, has its

deeds of prowess for emulation, and a whole cloud of witnesses to inspire to perseverance, activity, and triumph. The hearts and the eyes of the redeemed are with the Christian in his struggle, and the whole of the redeemed that are before the throne sympathize with him in his contest, and rejoice in his victory.

While the interest and sympathy of the redeemed are well fitted to animate the Christian and inspire his soul with energy, there is yet one other here set before him, whose whole course may well stir his spirit to duty, and strengthen and sustain him in the midst of contest. Amid the multitudes of the redeemed who are the witnesses of the scene there stands one to whom in our text the Christian man's eye is especially directed, whose example is to be the sunlight of his soul and the main-spring of his energies. Our text turns his eye to Christ. It exhibits Him as the interested spectator of the Christian's course, and courage, and success. It at the same time specially points him to the Saviour's obedience, and suffering, and death, as giving an example that might well inspire to perseverance and patience. He must be "looking unto Jesus." He may glance at others, and may gather something from their lives, but he must ever look, with the steady eye of faith, to Christ. Others may be looking to him; he must be looking away from all others, and steadily "looking unto Jesus." It is not to the redeemed, who by faith have obtained a good report, but to Him who is the Lord of the redeemed, and the author and the finisher of their faith, that he must steadily turn his eye of faith if he would run with patience, if he would be nerved with vigour and endurance, if he would be assured of success. The Christian man's exercise on this scene of contest is thus plainly set before us in these words of our text, "*Looking unto Jesus, the author*

and finisher of our faith ; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Here, then, in this verse we have Christ set before us in His example as the grand motive to Christian patience, and the grand pattern of Christian life, both in its progress and its issues. In the prosecution of our discourse we design to contemplate that obedience and suffering and death of our Lord out of which His example flows. For need I tell you that our Lord did not live, and suffer, and die simply as an example. He died as our substitute and surety. He died in our room and stead. He died for us. But while He died a sacrifice for sin, His obedience unto the death was a glorious example of patient endurance of suffering that is ever well worthy of the Christian's contemplation. Our text brings us thus within the scene where Christian faith is begotten, and born, and lives. It takes us to Calvary—to its sufferings and its triumphs. It bids us gaze on Him "*who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame.*"

In the prosecution of our discourse we shall notice—

I. THE SAVIOUR'S MEDIATORIAL OBEDIENCE IN THE MATTER OF IT.—It is here set before us by two things,—"*the cross and the shame.*" In this passage these are the two main elements of our Lord's obedience set before us, "*He endured the cross, despising the shame.*"

In speaking of "*the Cross,*" the first element in our Lord's obedience here brought before us, we must not narrow it to that last scene which closed His suffering by His death. The word of God commences it at His birth. It makes it inclusive of His whole life of humiliation from the manger to the grave. His infancy

was darkened by suffering. It was the attendant of every footstep of His life. It only left Him when He had left it by the door of death. As a life of suffering was the pathway to the cross, and the cross itself the lowest depth of the Saviour's humiliation and the bitterest portion of His woe, it gives its title to His whole life, as well as to the sufferings He bore on Calvary, where He was crucified and slain.

Keep in mind, then, that the whole of Christ's life was a part of His cross, just as the shades of the evening are a part of the blackness of the midnight; yet it is to Calvary we must come to learn what our text means by the cross of Christ. That scene can only rightly teach us what Christ did when "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Notice, then—

1. *The death of the cross was a death most painful.* Death and pain are most generally correlatives. Seldom does the life of the body depart but by the door of suffering—seldom, indeed, if it be stricken from its possessor by the hand of violence. The death of the cross was a death of violence,—a death of excruciating pain. Pierced through the hands and the feet, by which the body was fastened to the cross, thereafter to be upraised that the whole weight might be thrown upon those torn and tender extremities, how dreadful must have been the agony of the sufferer! By this mode of causing death no vital part is immediately reached. Death must come with tedious and lingering step. The sufferer is left by it to live on in exquisite anguish till death has crept up into his heart, and overpowered nature has shuddered out its last moaning of agonizing pain. Human ingenuity could not have devised a death of greater cruelty and suffering than this death of the cross.

2. *This death of the cross was a death most shameful.*

It was not only a death of violence, but designed to be a death of disgrace. It was intended to cover Him who suffered it with infamy. It was not a Jewish, but a Roman punishment. It was reckoned too ignominious for any Roman citizen ever to suffer it. Publicly exposed to the eye of every beholder as a criminal, with the crime for which he suffered written in large characters on the cross above his head, the punishment of crucifixion was only reserved for Roman slaves,—for the outcasts of society,—for those who were reckoned the vilest of mankind. Nay, to brand the memory with disgrace, it was not uncommon to crucify the dead bodies of those who by death had escaped the hands of justice, and in this way to stamp the character with ignominy. Such was the death of the cross. It was not so much because it was a death of pain as because it was a death of shame that the Jews demanded of Pilate that the Saviour should be crucified. By it they designed to cover His name with infamy, to degrade Him to the lowest point of debasement, to set Him forth before the world as only worthy of ignominy, to make the Saviour despised and accursed.

Such was the cross in these two elements of it as here before us; and yet there were other circumstances that made the death of our Lord at once painful and ignominious. The pain of the cross must not be confined to the death endured on it. It were to blot out a dark page of suffering if we were to shut our eyes to what preceded and accompanied it. The malice of His foes did not first reach the Saviour when they nailed Him to the tree. His being buffeted, derided, spit upon, scourged, were the preparation for the crucifixion. Crowned with thorns, and bearing His cross, He was led forth to be crucified amid the yelling of an insensate mob that thirsted for His life.

Nor must we confine the shame of our Lord's death to the mere circumstance that He died by crucifixion. His death was designed by His enemies to be one of no common shame and infamy. They released Barabbas, who for sedition and murder had been cast into prison, and, instead of him, demanded that Jesus should be crucified. They crucified Him between two thieves, as if He were the vilest of the three. They surrounded Him on the cross with reproaches, and loaded Him with indignities. The people that passed by railed at Him, wagging their heads. One of the thieves that was crucified with Him joined in their reproaches. The chief priests and the elders took part with the people in their scorning and derision. The cross was a death of shame, and human enmity did its worst to make our Lord's death upon it a death of ignominy.

Here, then, we have before us the two main elements in the matter of our Lord's obedience—His mediatorial obedience—as we turn our eye to His death upon the cross, and yet were we to close here the one-half of the truth were only told. It is granted that in this passage we have before us mainly what is external—what can easily be read by the eye of sense. When we speak of the cross of Christ, however, and, most generally, when Scripture speaks of it, we have before us something more than the external and the visible. Be it observed that if this death be a death of no common pain and no common shame, it is also the death of no common personage. We have as yet said but little that would take the cross of Christ away from the history of ordinary occurrences. We have noticed scarcely any element of suffering that is either peculiar or distinctive. When we turn our eye to Christ's cross, we must look through all this visible and external covering of pain and shame to learn its true

significance, and know what Christ did when "*He endured the cross, despising the shame.*"

And here, to get at the matter of our Lord's obedience in His death upon the cross, it becomes us to remember the character in which He endured it, and thereby to gather up the elements that specially explain it. It were worse than the merest waste of time to endeavour to account for our Lord's death on ordinary principles, or His agony upon the cross by the operation of ordinary laws. It is not necessary to remind you that the cross is the death-bed of incarnate Deity, and that sufferer a sacrifice for sin—that He dies there that guilt may be expiated and mankind sinners saved. External pain and shame in such a case, while a part of the Saviour's suffering, were only symbolic of a deeper anguish and a more awful distress.

The cross of Christ, while a scene of external suffering, is also a scene of voluntary and vicarious death as a sacrifice for sin, and thus especially a scene of agony of soul. Some there are who make representations of the cross of Christ, and of the Saviour upon it, as if the visible were all of it. Now it is only where the visible ceases that the grand peculiarities of the cross of Christ begin. Up to the merely visible, poor sinning humanity has often suffered, but in Christ's cross there is an inner circle beyond the visible that none but Christ ever entered, and where neither man nor angel could have stood. I speak not now of the malice of man, I speak not simply of the malignity of devils, I speak especially and emphatically of the wrath of God. Over that inner circle of suffering of which external pain and shame were only the fringes, do we find upon the Saviour's cross not only the thickest darkness of spiritual midnight, but the flashing indignation of a guilt-avenging God. There upon the

cross, under the hidings of His Father's countenance, He bore the penalty of His Father's wrath. There, as the substitute of sinners, being made sin, He was made a curse. There men reproached Him. There hell raged against Him. There the sword of divine justice smote Him. There the voice of desertion proclaimed His mental agony as He passed through this storm of wrath, and drank the cup of trembling to the dregs. The cross is the travail of the Saviour's soul, the scene of the soul-sorrowfulness of a God-forsaken, God-stricken spirit, that endures the cross, despising the shame.

And here it becomes us to notice the necessity for this death of the cross as we have now explained it. Need I tell you that death is the wages of sin,—the penalty that lay on sinners who had not only failed to obey the divine law, but transgressed its precept, and thus incurred that penalty of death. In infinite compassion God from all eternity purposed their redemption and salvation. In the exercise of wondrous love He set up His Son in the everlasting covenant of grace, to be the substitute and surety of His people, who should effect their redemption by the shedding of His precious blood. God the Son consented to the terms of the covenant. He became the substitute and surety of His people. For the purpose of their redemption He took upon Him their nature. He became "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh." Taking their nature, He also took upon Him their guilt. God laid on Him the burden of their iniquities. To expiate that guilt its penalty must be borne. There must be the rigid satisfaction—death for death. Because His people had failed to obey, Christ obeyed in their room, and fulfilled for them all righteousness. Because by transgression they had brought upon themselves the penalty of death, He died in their stead. It was because of this His blood

was shed. It was shed in sacrifice for sin. Without this blood-shedding there could be no remission of sin. But as a sacrifice Christ endured the cross. His blood was shed in expiation for guilt. As His people's substitute and surety, He died a sacrifice for sin. "*He endured the cross, despising the shame.*"

And then, to explain the suffering connected with His expiatory sacrifice, it becomes us to remember what are the elements of that death which is the penalty of sin. It were, indeed, a very superficial view to limit it to mere temporal death. No, the curse due to sin takes hold of the whole of man's complex nature. At the moment of the fall, death seized upon the soul of man, for God, who in His complacent love is the soul's life, had left it, and it was from that moment dead in trespasses and sins. Nay, at that moment of sin it not only became spiritually dead, it became exposed to temporal and eternal death. The body became the destined property of death, which should sever the soul from its earthly tabernacle. And, if there be no redemption for the lost, no salvation for the guilty, then eternal death must be the sinner's doom—the wrath and curse of God upon soul and body for evermore. Now, if Christ's cross is to be the expiation of human guilt by the endurance of its penalty, then death in all its elements must be endured by Him both in His body and soul. And all these elements do you find in the concentration of their pain, and suffering, and sorrow, as you gaze upon the Saviour's cross. Temporal death was in the penalty, and hence His body was nailed to the cross, and on that cross He expired in agony. Spiritual death was in the penalty. Man had deserted God by sin, and God deserted him in punishment, and this punishment of guilt did the Lord bear upon the cross when thus He expressed the sorrow of His soul: "My God, my God,

why hast Thou forsaken me ?” Then, eternal death was in the penalty, and our Lord upon the cross suffered what was answerable to it, for there He bore the heavy burden of the wrath of God due to us for sin. The whole burden of the guilt of His people lay on Him, and all that the penalty of death involved in it He endured. Thus it was that suffering not only coursed through every member of His body, but made His spotless soul to be torn with the pangs of bitter anguish. Everything that could cause suffering, and pain, and sorrow to the holy soul He endured. All that is to be found in wrath and curse He bore. He suffered all that God’s law and justice required Him to endure in order to man’s redemption and salvation. When He said upon the cross, “It is finished,” all that was needed in order to the expiation of guilt had been suffered—the whole cup of trembling had been drunk to the dregs—the whole of the wrath of God against sin had been borne. He had “*endured the cross, despising the shame.*”

II. THE SAVIOUR’S MEDIATORIAL OBEDIENCE IN THE MANNER OF IT.—“*He endured the cross, He despised the shame.*” This, you perceive, tells of something more than mere endurance. It is descriptive of the manner in which our Lord met His sufferings and death.

1. *The form of the expression leads us to remark that He bore the cross with fortitude.* We do not mean by fortitude that kind of courage which rushes heedlessly on danger, and exposes itself rashly to trial. We mean by it that calm, conscious boldness that goes through trial met by it in the path of duty with unyielding and unfaltering firmness. This was the fortitude which our Lord displayed. He met the cross with true courage. He neither shrank from it nor shunned it. With firm

purpose and unwavering intent He gave Himself to death.

Be it observed that there is one thing about our Lord's fortitude that enhances it. Men may come unconsciously to trial. The storm may break on them without any premonition of its approach, and without any former experience of its tempestuous breath. Men often meet trial with courage, because until endured they were unconscious of its pain. Often would they shrink from it and seek to shun it if they could realize it ere it came. We have no such ignorance nor unconsciousness here. In all the clearness of His foreknowledge as God, there lay before the Saviour the sufferings that awaited Him. Nor did He go to the cross on Calvary as God-Man unconscious of its woe. The agony of Gethsemane was not only fitted to be a lesson of what the cross should be; and certainly, amidst others, it had one grand design in it, to give the Saviour beforehand, as God-Man, such an experience of the cross in its main elements of suffering as that, in the fullest consciousness of what was before Him, He might choose it and go forth freely to its endurance. Until the garden of Gethsemane the Saviour had no realizing experience as God-Man of what the cross should be. As He went forth from that garden He was sensibly conscious as God-Man of its dread realities. And with this fact before us, you will not find in the whole history of the past an utterance of nobler heroism than this which falls from our Saviour's lips after Gethsemane's agony and bloody sweat: "Rise, let us be going; he that betrayeth me is at hand." Stedfastly did He set His face to go up to Jerusalem. Readily did He yield Himself into the hands of His enemies, though He might have had twelve legions of angels for His rescue. Resolutely did He meet the

suffering that awaited Him: "*He endured the cross, despising the shame.*"

And then it cannot be forgotten, when we look at the special consciousness of what the sufferings were that awaited Him, that He went to the cross with the fullest free-will choice, that His death was thus in the clearest light a sacrifice for sin. It is the free-will choice of the cross and its suffering that made the death a sacrifice. Let it be borne in mind that it is not what we do or what we bear that makes our doing and our bearing acceptable to God. We may be compelled to do and to bear with murmuring insubmissiveness. It is when we freely make choice of God's will to do what He assigns, and bear what He appoints, that our doing and our bearing are well pleasing in His sight. Take away, then, Christ's free choice of the cross, and the essence of atoning sacrifice is gone. But here you see that after the fullest consciousness of what that cross should be in its suffering and sorrow, He freely makes choice of it, and endures it. "*He endured the cross, despising the shame.*"

2. *While Christ endured the cross with fortitude, there were other elements in the manner of endurance that specially distinguished Him.* On these we do not at present separately dwell. Can we fail, however, to mark the meekness which shone forth amidst all His sufferings, the patience that bore with indignity, the pity that turns its eye on the weeping daughters of Jerusalem, the forgiving spirit that will only pray for His murderers, the tender affection that forgets not His weeping mother amidst all His sore suffering and sorrow, the divinity that closes His career by the pardon of a soul? Oh, never was there a death like this! Never shone there forth from a death of violence such lights of glory to

irradiate a character, and pronounce it unparalleled and divine ! “ *He endured the cross, despising the shame.*”

3. *There is one additional element in the manner of our Lord's obedience which our text particularly notices, and which we may not forget. “He despised the shame.”* Shame is often worse to bear than suffering, infamy a more serious trial than torture. Many will meet affliction undaunted that would shrink from ignominy. There is scarcely anything more difficult than meekness and patience and courage under shame. The cross was a scene of shame ; nor was the Saviour impassible to ignominy. He knew and He felt it. He did not despise it because it was no trial to meet it. He was conscious of the shame.

But our Lord despised the shame of the cross. As the original word bears, He cast it out of His thoughts. He looked down upon it. With the grand end of the cross before Him, in the glory of God and the redemption and salvation of sinful men, He met indignity with meekness, and shame with patience. All the shame of the cross could not turn him from His purpose or shake His fixed resolve. Unmoved He listened to contempt and ridicule. Reproach might break His heart, but it could not keep Him from the cross, nor bring Him from the accursed tree. “ *He endured the cross, despising the shame.*”

III. THE SAVIOUR'S MEDIATORIAL OBEDIENCE IN THE END OF IT.—“*Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame.*” These words tell us that our Lord did not suffer without a special object in view. There was an end worthy of His suffering to be attained by it, a reward which should be His, because of His agony and cross. It is here denominated His joy, what animated His soul and sustained Him under trial.

This joy in Scripture wears a twofold aspect, as it bears upon Christ's own people and as it bore upon Himself. Notice—

1. *The Joy of the Saviour was the glory of God in the salvation of His people.* This joy was “set before Him.” It was the glory of God in the salvation of sinful men. This was the end of Christ's sufferings, the joy that sustained Him, the joy of delivering sinners from the guilt and power and pollution of sin, conforming them by grace to His glorious image, and putting them in possession of everlasting bliss. This joy had been “set before Him.” It had been pledged to Him by God in covenant that He should see His seed if He gave His soul an offering for sin. He saw guilty men in ruin. He pitied them, He undertook for them. He was sent by God to suffer and to save them. Death was their doom,—it was the penalty of sin, and He must die if He would redeem them. In no other way could justice be satisfied and the sinner released. He knew that His obedience unto death was a sacrifice which God had promised to accept as the ransom of guilty men; that for the sake of it sinners would be pardoned and blessed. His eye was on the cross, but also on its issues. He foresaw the glorious triumphs of His sacrifice. He saw, by the grace of the Divine Spirit, the promise to Him of the Father in virtue of that sacrifice, sinners believing and penitent, souls pardoned and saved, heaven peopled out of a world of ruined men, and God glorified. This was to be the end of His sacrifice and the issue of His cross. It was “the joy set before Him” in the promise of the covenant, in which He was set up as the substitute and surety of His people. It had been made known in every promise and prophecy and prediction of Old Testament times. It was matter of the divine will and

purpose. The joy of it was the life's blood of His heart. The thought of it, the assurance of it, sustained Him through all His suffering and sorrow. As it brought Him to earth, so it took Him to Calvary, and bore Him through all the immeasurable anguish of the cross. For "*this joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame.*"

2. *As this end bore upon Himself, it was the Joy He had in view of His own glory as the Mediator, on the completion of His sufferings on the cross.* The Saviour's mediatorial obedience and suffering had a personal as well as a relative issue. The cross endured by Him was not only the security of the believer's salvation, but by covenant it was to be the ground of His own mediatorial glory. Humiliation and death were the pathway to the mediatorial throne. If He humbled Himself, God had promised that He should highly exalt Him; that mediatorial honour, dominion, and power should be the issue of His sacrifice; that not only should His sacrifice be accepted as the ground of the believing sinner's salvation, but Himself should be crowned with glory and honour at the right hand of God. This promised glory, the pledge of His Father's acceptance of His work of sacrifice, was also the matter of the Saviour's joy. In His humanity He had been humbled, in His humanity He was to be glorified. In His humanity He had been dishonoured, in His humanity He was to be enthroned. As Mediator He was to suffer, as Mediator He should reign. To Him, as Jesus, every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. In virtue of His death of accepted sacrifice, the voice of God would proclaim, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." In virtue of that death let the redeemed adore Him in songs of grateful praise; let the sceptre of universal dominion

be put into His hands; let Him have authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man. This was "*the joy that was set before Him*," that animated and sustained Him while "*He endured the cross, despising the shame*."

And it is just because we see this first part of the joy set before Him fulfilled, it is just because, as God-Man made perfect as a Saviour through suffering, we now see Him crowned with glory and honour, that we have assurance that the other part of the joy shall be fully realized. This is what the apostle in this Epistle sets before us in the second chapter, when he tells us that Christ as Mediator was to be crowned with glory and honour, and that all things were to be put under His feet. Then, as now, he did not see all things as yet put under Him, but he saw Jesus, as we now also see Him, crowned with glory and honour, the pledge of the fulfilment of what constitutes the fulness of the Saviour's joy. The fulfilment of the first part of the promise was the guarantee and assurance of the fulfilment of the last. Yes, His present place upon the throne, His present glory and honour with which the Father has invested Him in token of the acceptance of His sacrifice in the room of the guilty, is the assurance that He shall yet have the realization of His joy to the full, when the whole host of the redeemed around the throne, the whole sacramental host of God's elect, shall be presented before God a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Then shall the joy of the Saviour be *fully realized*, "*that joy for which He endured the cross, despising the shame*."

IN CONCLUSION. (1) As we reflect on the cross of Christ, on His passion and pain, on the cause of His suffering,

on the object for which He suffered, can we fail to see and to say, "Behold how He loved us!" Measure the love by the sufferings which He bore, and it has a height, a depth, and a length and breadth which passeth all knowledge. Keep in mind that His whole life of obedience and death, of pain and shame and curse, was for sinners, that all He ever did, He did for them, that all He suffered, He suffered for them, that He lived for them and died for them; and as you stand before this mighty endurance, as you contemplate this unparalleled sacrifice of Himself that sinners might be saved, is not the love that bore it amazing and divine? It is love like an ocean which is unfathomable and shoreless. It is unspeakable and full of glory.

Nor need I say that if you measure Christ's love by its objects, is it not wondrous love? He loved us when we were enemies. Though we were laden with guilt, and polluted with sin's defiling influence, and bound in the fetters of spiritual death, without one single feature of character to attract His love, but everything to repel it, yet still He loved us, with a love so deep as to bear Him to all the sorrows of Gethsemane and to all the agonies of the cross. Surely it becomes us, as His believing people, to give to Him a loving heart. Surely it should be ours to do with diligence the work He may assign us, and to bear with patience the trials He may appoint us. Trusting in Him, and resting on the all-sufficient aids of His blessed Spirit, should we not be prepared for every trial that may meet us for His sake, to endure shame and reproach and suffering if need be for His cause, to be prepared for every demand of self-denial and self-sacrifice for His glory? In love He gave Himself for us, and surely in love we ought to give ourselves to Him, to be ready for work or warfare, that we may

manifest that love, and be made by Him instrumental for the advancement of His glory. Let us seek to drink into the spirit of Him "*who, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame.*"

All salvation, as you know, depends on faith in Him, as He is offered in the gospel. Ye who believe have taken Him by faith as your Saviour, made perfect through suffering, and you are resting on Him by faith for all that you need, for He is your all in all—made of God to you wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. You have been enabled by His grace to lay down the weapons of your rebellion, and submit to God in the obedience of faith—to understand what the word of God means when it says that it is not to him who worketh, but to him who worketh not, but believeth, that salvation comes, and now, believing, you shall never see condemnation, but are passed from death unto life. You have known and believed the love which God hath to us. You have trusted and are trusting Christ alone for salvation and life. Need I tell you that you are part of the Saviour's joy. He has rejoiced and is rejoicing over you with singing. You are a joy to Him, and shall be a joy to Him for ever. You were the joy set before Him, when "*He endured the cross, despising the shame.*"

Are there those here who are yet enemies of the cross of Christ—who have not yet turned unto God by faith in Christ, who is God's appointed Saviour, who is divinely qualified to save, and who in virtue of His sacrifice is set forth by God Himself to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness in the remission of sins, that He might be just, and yet the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus? Oh, let me beseech you to give joy to the Redeemer's heart by the

acceptance of Christ as your Saviour, for the salvation of sinners is the pleasure of the Lord. Oh, how He longs for your personal salvation! He yearns over your souls with all the earnestness of infinite love. He wishes to save you. He longs to save you. He will not cast you out. Come unto Him; He will not cast you out if you come. He pleads with you to come. "Come unto Me, all ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He will receive you if you come. Oh, listen to His voice and now accept Him, for now is the accepted time and the day of salvation. Refuse Him, delay acceptance, and the wrath of God on you still abideth. Now accept Him by faith, and there will be joy in heaven because of it—joy before the angels of God. Yea, there will be joy in the Saviour's heart. He will see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. You will give to Him of the joy set before Him, when "*He endured the cross, despising the shame.*" Amen.

XII.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST BEHELD BY THE EYE OF REASON, CONSCIENCE, AND AFFECTION.

“ Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned. And all His acquaintance, and the women that followed Him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.”—LUKE xxiii. 47, 48, 49.

A DEATHBED is a scene ever surrounded with the elements of the deepest interest. It matters not where the dying man be beheld, or the head of the dying man be laid, there you have before you a sight fitted to arrest the spirit, and fill it with the deepest awe. I am aware that it is possible to become so familiar with the sight of death that it may lose in some measure its power of impression upon the mind,—just as the winter blast wears away the well-chiselled letters of the tombstone,—that cold oblivion may reap her harvesting, yet never can any man wholly rid himself of all serious and solemn feeling as he gazes on the couch where the dying struggles in weary and unsuccessful contest with the last enemy. There is something in the deathbed of any man which vividly portrays our own, and foreshows what ere long we ourselves shall meet. It is this consciousness, of which no man can rid himself, that makes the deathbed of every one beheld by us, be he known or unknown, a

sight awakening the most solemn feeling. There, as the beholder witnesses the pale cheek, the sunken eye, the cold sweat upon the brow, the toiling breath, the unceasing restlessness of the frame, ere the soul severs from its clay tabernacle, he realizes in deepest consciousness what he himself shall ere long experience, and acknowledges in silent awe the sovereignty of death.

This is a sovereignty which no man can scorn, for, willingly or unwillingly, he must submit to death's supremacy. Still, while the deathbed of any one, even though unknown, ever affects us, how deeply do we feel when death comes within the circle of our affections and tears away our loved ones from our embrace! Who fails to remember the impression produced upon his spirit when, through bereavement, he sat under the shadow of his first great grief? Who forgets the personal acquaintanceship he gained of death when he first saw his presence reflected from the face of one he loved? The first sight of a deathbed is ever impressive. It lives in our remembrance. Especially is it impressive if it be the deathbed of one we dearly love. That gives a realizing consciousness of death we never had before. No matter how far we need to travel back in memory to reach the scene, there it is, as fresh as ever in its incidents and associations as when first it took its place amidst the records of our experiences of the past.

Here, in our text, we have brought before us our Lord's death upon the cross, and those who were the witnesses of the closing scene of His life. Many were there to behold the crucifixion, and very different were the motives that had convened the vast assembly. Not less different were the feelings experienced by them as they watched the event. The inspired writers, however, have not left us in doubt as to what were the effects produced by the

crucifixion and death of our Lord, and what were the feelings that distinguished the chief of the beholders. The Evangelist Luke has grouped these effects and set forth these feelings in the words which we have read as the subject of our discourse—"Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned. And all His acquaintance, and the women that followed Him from Galilee, stood afar off beholding these things."

I need scarcely say that there are three distinguishing faculties in the human soul that are chiefly fitted to give testimony to truth, and whose evidence is all-important in any endeavour to reach it. These faculties are the reason, the conscience, and the heart. Here, in these verses, we have testimony concerning our Lord's crucifixion and death from all these sources, gathered up and grouped by the evangelist, and it becomes specially important for us in these days, as in all time, rightly to regard it. It sets forth before us very important lessons, that enter into the very essence of the things that are most surely believed among us. Let us see what are the lessons we learn from these verses concerning the character and claims of our blessed Lord, as He died upon the cross.

These verses bring before us three things, to which, in the prosecution of our discourse, we shall direct your attention. I. The cross, as in the 47th verse, viewed by the eye of reason; II. The cross, as in the 48th verse, viewed by the eye of conscience; and III. The cross, as in the 49th verse, viewed by the eye of affection. These comprehend what is said concerning those who beheld these things.

I. THE CROSS VIEWED BY THE EYE OF REASON. “*Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.*” In Matthew it is said, “*Now when the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.*” So also in Mark it is said, “*And when the centurion which stood over against Him saw that He so cried out and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this was the Son of God.*”

Here we find that the centurion made use of two expressions of his conviction when our Lord gave up the ghost, in one of which we find those soldiers that were with him are said to share. The centurion and the four soldiers were no unconcerned spectators of the scene on Calvary. After the work of crucifixion was done, it is said that “sitting down, they watched Him there.” The centurion stood over against the Saviour’s cross, we are told by Mark, because his deepest interest had been excited, and he was determined to scan His demeanour to the end, to watch everything that was done, to hear all that He said, to note every circumstance with minutest accuracy. Hence it was that when he and his soldiers saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, he said, “*Certainly this was a righteous man,*” while both he and the soldiers declared, “*Truly this was the Son of God.*”

Now here we see from the evangelists that the earthquake which proclaimed the Saviour’s decease, and the events and circumstances which attended the crucifixion, appealed most powerfully to the reason of the centurion and the soldiers. Remember what they had witnessed. They had seen the sun, that at mid-day had shrouded the cross on Calvary in darkness ; they had felt the heaving of the earthquake ; they had seen the rending of the rocks ; but perhaps more convincing than all these, they

had seen the Saviour's dying demeanour. They had seen the unruffled meekness and unparalleled resignation with which the Saviour had met and endured the sufferings of the cross, the divine compassion and superhuman forbearance He had extended to His revilers and murderers. They had heard all the wondrous words of love and mercy that had proceeded out of His mouth after He was nailed to the accursed tree ; His prayer for themselves, " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do ;" His saying to the penitent thief by His side, " To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise ;" the word of tender affection for His mother, " Woman, behold thy son !" They had heard the sad cry of His soul-desertion, which no bodily suffering and no earthly adversary could ever have evoked, " My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me ?" They had heard the bitter outcry of physical suffering, " I thirst." Then, as the three hours' darkness vanished, they had heard the triumphant, far-reaching cry of victory, " It is finished !" and the completing voice of death, as with cheerful confidence He yielded up His soul to God, " Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." The whole of the Saviour's demeanour on the cross, all that fell from His lips, with the prodigies with which His death was accompanied, produced in the centurion's mind, and in the minds of those who were with him, the undoubted conviction which they thus expressed : "*Certainly this was a righteous man.*" "*Truly this was the Son of God.*"

Mark, then, what is the testimony of reason as it gazes upon the crucifixion scene. The first testimony is this : "*Certainly this was a righteous man.*" The meaning of these words is this, that while previously it might seem a matter of doubt, yet to any one who had been a spectator of the crucifixion scene there could be no doubt at all

that Christ was just or righteous—that His condemnation and death was a grievous crime. Nay, in this open avowal of our Lord's righteousness there is a formal approval of all the doctrine of Christ respecting Himself, which had been matter of discussion before the bar of Pilate. By the Jews before that bar it had been said, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." These words are the expression of the conviction of our Lord's innocence in the very hour of His death. Nay, they are rightly followed by the utterance, "*Truly this was the Son of God.*"

Now this was a very striking testimony from the lips of the centurion, a testimony which his fellow-soldiers are ready to share. The centurion knew the charge which the Jews brought against our Lord. He said, "I am the Son of God." The whole that he had seen and heard appealed to his reason, and said, "Is it not true what the sufferer has said?" And the centurion's reason, convinced of the truth of the claim which the Saviour had made, declares his conviction in the plain and unambiguous utterance, "*Truly this was the Son of God.*"

Here, then, is the testimony of reason at the cross of Christ to His true and proper divinity. It did not mean simply that the Saviour was more than man. From all he had heard and seen, the centurion regarded Christ as no other than the Messiah, the Son of God. He was not ignorant of what the Saviour's Messiahship meant. He had heard all that had transpired before Pilate's tribunal. He had heard and seen all that the crucifixion on Calvary had taught. It was with the consciousness of what the words meant that the centurion said, "*Truly this was the Son of God.*"

Now, let it be observed that the whole of what the

centurion and they who were with him had seen on Calvary was only explainable on the principle that Deity incarnate had been manifested before them. The whole was only cumulative evidence to the truth of what the centurion confessed. One page of evidence follows another till the conviction becomes overwhelming, and thus reason, as personified in the centurion and in the soldiers, is constrained to say, "*Truly this is the Son of God.*" And need I say, if God incarnate had not been there, there had been no such testimony to draw men's eyes to the crucifixion scene. But let us no less carefully remember that, but for God's Spirit, even this centurion and they who were with him would never have been brought to the conviction, nor given forth this expressive utterance confessing it. Christ's cross at Christ's death must not lack testimony from reason to His presence, and thus, therefore, does this witness proclaim, "*Truly this was the Son of God.*"

II. THE CROSS AS VIEWED BY THE EYE OF CONSCIENCE.

It is said, "*And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things that were done, smote their breasts, and returned.*" There is no reference here to Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim. The reference is to the people, who, instigated by them, had said, "We have no king but Cæsar." "His blood be on us and on our children." It is said of them "*that they, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.*"

Smiting upon the breast is the expression of deep feeling. Like the centurion and the soldiers, they had seen the whole of the transactions of this singular day, they had heard the sayings of Calvary, they had beheld the signs which followed our Lord's death upon the accursed tree, and now, with consciences touched to the

core by the evidence with which the Saviour's death had been accompanied, under the influence of deep feeling "*they smote upon their breasts.*"

What, however, was the feeling which led to this expressive external act? Most probably it was somewhat mingled. We think it plainly pointed to the conviction they now in some measure cherished of Christ's innocence, and to the awful guilt which His crucifixion had entailed. Nay, did not all that had occurred awaken in their minds the question, Was not this the Son of God? They knew that He had claimed to be divine; they had heard the chief priests and scribes accuse Him of blasphemy before Pilate; they knew that for this He had been condemned by the Sanhedrim. Did not there then arise in their minds the thought that after all He might be that same Messiah He had proclaimed Himself to be, and that the awful deed of which they had been guilty would be visited by divine judgment? One thing is certain, that the guilt of the crucifixion is borne in upon their consciences, and under a sense of fear and remorse "*they smote upon their breasts as they returned.*"

I cannot help thinking that here, in an awakened conscience at the cross, we have a preparation of spirit for the day of Pentecostal power. For it is just a sight of guilt and the fear of the divine displeasure, awakened at the cross, that becomes a preparation under God for conversion and salvation. I do not differ thus from those who think that now began to be fulfilled the words spoken by the prophet, "Then will I pour upon the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication: and they shall look on Him whom they have pierced, and mourn, as one that mourneth for an only son," that it was a first step of

preparation for the Pentecostal harvest of souls, which, by the preaching of the Gospel were gathered to the Lord.

And most certainly it was an outward expression of the testimony of conscience to Him who had died on Calvary. You will not explain it by any merely natural causes. Take a view for a moment of the circumstances of the case. Up to the time of our Lord's death only one feeling, as far as we can see, animates the crowd of spectators. With the exception of those mentioned in the next verse, they, around our Lord's cross, are only His bitterest foes, who load Him with reproaches and revilings. The rulers were the first in this work of mockery, but the people also joined them as they stood around the cross. During the three hours' darkness all is silence. Until our Lord's death there is no change seen on the temper of the crowd. Whence then this revulsion of feeling, this singular and sudden change, from the scorning of the lip to the smiting of the breast? Will it do to say that death has burnt out all that bitterness of spirit with which the Saviour was assailed, that it has been extinguished by the mere fact of death? Will it satisfy any reflecting mind to conclude that, now as the sentence has been carried into effect, the spirit of the multitude has been changed into sorrow for the dead?

For my part, I cannot account for this significant expression of feeling except from the operation of an extraordinary cause. Such sudden and widespread revulsion of feeling can never be explained by the operation of ordinary causes, for ordinary causes never produce it. What, then, was the cause? We may explain the cause by explaining the reason of it. It is most remarkable that God in His providence permits His Son to suffer all manner of indignities at the hands of

men up to the moment of His death, but not beyond it. Not one scoffing voice, not one taunting tongue, must be upraised by the crowd around the cross when once by death His work has been finished. Nay, the taunting tongue must be silenced and the scorning lip must be sealed, in such a way as to become itself a testimony to the dignity and divinity of Him who died. God lets abroad over the crowd an influence of divine power, to the awaking of conscience. I do not say that the awaking, in the case of all who were at Calvary, issued in their conversion. I doubt not that some, perhaps many, were gathered by the Pentecostal power of the Divine Spirit into the fold of Christ. But not only must the eye of reason behold, and the voice of reason declare, "*Truly this was the Son of God ;*" but the voice of conscience must also give expressive testimony to the character of the Saviour as He hangs upon the cross, and thus "*they who had beheld the things which were done smote their breasts, and returned.*"

Such was the effect on conscience by one single touch of divine power, bringing it in contact with God, responsibility, and guilt. Now, not everything will touch the conscience into feeling. It is the only faculty of the human soul that can only be reached by divine truth and the hand of God. You can reach the intellect by a stern demonstration of mathematical analysis, and compel its admission of the truth you set before it. But you cannot thus reach conscience. You can touch the imagination by the creations of poetic fancy and by the beauties of poetic song, but you cannot thus reach the conscience. You can charm the heart into tenderness by a tale of distress, or awaken pity by a sight of human woe, but you cannot thus reach the conscience. It requires a lever power of more masterful energy. To

touch it you must bring it in contact with Divine truth, truth that reveals God, responsibility, and guilt, and then its power is awakened into life. Here, then, is a scene where by such a process conscience has been touched, so as to give forth its expressive testimony to Him that died on Calvary. It is God's voice within that crowd proclaiming what the centurion's voice had uttered, "Truly this was the Son of God." This testimony is the only explanation of the smiting of the breast.

And mark how expressive the testimony is. It is not one solitary person returning that smites his breast on his way to the city. The words of the evangelist make no exception, save in the case of the chief priests and the scribes. Look, then, at the scene. It is a most singular and impressive one. Multitudes have gone out of the city to witness the crucifixion. The hill of Calvary has been crowded with spectators. We are told that there went out a great company of people. They went out applauding the deed of condemnation and ratifying the sentence of crucifixion. But look at them as they return. You will not find one that does not share in the pervading feeling. Look at the procession. It is a vast company. It gives universal expression to the voice of conscience by the same outward act. Was there ever such a sight beheld before or since? What is the whole scene but only the cumulative testimony of conscience to the divinity of the Son of God? Such a sight on any other principle of solution would be wholly inexplicable. The eye of conscience as it rests on the cross has only this testimony revealed by the outward act. They returned, all of them "*smiting their breasts.*"

III. THE CROSS VIEWED BY THE EYE OF AFFECTION.—

"*And all His acquaintance, and the women that followed*

Him from Galilee, stood afar off beholding these things." Matthew tells us, "*Many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Him from Galilee, ministering unto Him.*" Mark says that "*these were looking on afar off.*"

Here we have the cross viewed by the eye of affection, for the presence of these women there was only the evidence of their love, and a testimony to Christ's true character and glory, even in the hour of His suffering and death. John the apostle is the only disciple named as present at the cross, while the three Marys are the only women who find a place in his Gospel as near to it, before the Saviour yielded up the ghost. Their position was a testimony to the depth and genuineness of their love. It was love to our Lord as the Son of God and their Saviour that led them to follow Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, and from Pilate's tribunal to the cross. It was love that kept them there. I speak not here of mere natural affection, which warms the heart towards kindred and friends, but of that holy principle of love which faith implants in every genuine believer's soul, that heaven-born affection which glows in the heart of every disciple of the Lord who has been gladdened by the influence of divine grace. Natural affection is a very powerful passion. How deep is the emotion it awakens in the parental heart! Nay, how strong is the attachment frequently of friends whom love has knit and sympathy made one! But the power that brought and kept the women at the cross was not the power of nature but of grace. They believed in Christ as the Messiah, as their Saviour and Lord. They loved Him because through Him their sins had been forgiven, and their love would not allow them to be absent from Calvary, or separated from Him even in death. Their love was their testimony to the character in which

He died, while it echoed forth the voice which reason had uttered and conscience had expressed: "Truly this was the Son of God." And need I say this is the voice of the love of all true discipleship. The more ardent the love of any disciple, the more emphatic will be this voice of his testimony. He who in the spirit of love cleaves to Christ, undismayed by danger and unshrinking amidst all the fears of death, is he who most fully feels and proclaims, "Truly this is the Son of God." Love to Christ is the essence of all genuine religion. To lack it is to lack the eye which discovers the Saviour's glory, which can pierce through all the external humiliation of the cross, and behold there the God-Man crucified and slain. But there on that cross affection has the eye to see and the voice to proclaim, as the confession of its unwavering faith, "*Truly this is the Son of God.*"

And then remember what true affection beheld at the cross, to lead it to deepened conviction and faith in the testimony it bore by its presence there. Did not those of the household of faith who were there, behold our Lord's dying demeanour? Most instructive is it to stand by a good man's deathbed, and learn there how a Christian man can die. How much there was to be learned by attentive observation of the Saviour's deathbed scene! They who beheld Him saw Him the same in death as in life. He died as He had lived, with unshaken confidence in God and with undiminished love to men. Though He was reviled, He reviled not again. He was dumb, though reproach had broken His heart. Nay, they had listened to His deathbed sayings, and they also had beheld all the remarkable circumstances that accompanied His decease. They were not inattentive listeners to the voices from His cross, nor careless witnesses of all the prodigies that

occurred around it. And think you that all this did not strengthen the faith in the testimony which their love had borne to Christ by their presence on Calvary. Did the events connected with our Lord's death so influence the centurion and those that were with him as to constrain him to testify to the divinity of the sufferer, and was all the lesson lost upon them? Did the multitude under the power of conscience smite their breasts as they returned from Calvary, the expressive testimony of their conviction, and had all no effect upon them? Had Christ saved a penitent thief in vain for them, had the preternatural darkness, the earthquake, the rending of the rocks, and all the signs of nature, been in vain for them? No, verily. With deepened conviction, with confirmed faith, the voice of their love could go forth in unequivocal testimony to His Messiahship and glory: "*Truly this was the Son of God.*"

And thus you see that the grand fact which is essential to all the truth about Christ's person, the fact of Christ's true and proper divinity, is attested by reason and conscience and affection on the very scene of His crucifixion and amidst all the circumstances of His deep humiliation. There was no need while He was upon the cross to testify to the Saviour's true and proper humanity. That was a fact plain and palpable to the minds and senses of men. But you see how, out of all the depths of our Lord's humiliation, and even because of it, there arises such convincing evidence to His being God-Man, God manifest in flesh, as to constrain the onlookers of the crucifixion, by their lips and acts, to testify to the truth of His true and proper divinity, that truth which is so essential to the work and worth of His Mediatorship, and which bears so materially on the eternal salvation of men. The testimony of the onlookers of Christ's cross

is still as fresh as ever in its power to carry conviction to the minds of men, as it comes to us through all the past ages in these words of the centurion, "*Truly this was the Son of God.*"

For be it remarked that if Christ be not God, He never can be an atoning sacrifice for the guilty, and His death on Calvary is no propitiation for sin. He who gives his life for others as a ransom must have a life of his own to offer. But if Christ be not God, He has no life of His own to give. It could never be said by any mere creature, "I have power to lay down my life, and power to take it again." This power tells of the prerogative of God alone. Nay, if Christ be not God, then not only is it impossible for Him to give a life which is not His own to offer in sacrifice, but even if given it could have no atoning efficacy. It would lack in it all the value that is available for the expiation of human guilt. And then how could Christ ever be a Mediator, a daysman between God and the sinner, if He could not lay His hand upon both, having the divine nature as well as the human, to qualify Him effectually to mediate and reconcile? If Christ be not God, then, as far as human salvation is concerned, He has died in vain. Through His blood there is no pardon for our guilt, no purity for our pollution, no liberty for our spiritual bondage, no life for our spiritual death. But it is the glory of the gospel to proclaim that God sent His Son into the world, that the Word was made flesh, that God was manifest in flesh, that thus the death on Calvary was the death of incarnate Deity, who died the just one for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. It proclaims that Calvary was the scene of His propitiatory sacrifice, where He finished transgression, and made an end of sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness, and made reconciliation for the

transgressors. And thus is it that to the great fact which lies at the foundation of all the truth, and mercy, and glory of the gospel, and even out of all the circumstances of the Saviour's deep humiliation when He died, we have the most convincing evidence, alike given by the reason and the conscience and the heart of man, of His divinity and glory, as these words fall upon our ear, "*Truly this was the Son of God.*"

IN CONCLUSION. Let this great truth of Christ's true and proper divinity be never lost sight of by you in every view you take of His character and work. You will find many in these days who have taken in hand to write the life of Christ. They give as the reason that the human side of Him, as they call it, had been somewhat lost sight of in many of the utterances of theological opinion. And thus it has happened that, in giving what they call the human side of His character, they have in some cases greatly forgotten, and in others entirely cast aside, the truth that He was God over all, blessed for ever, that He was essential God, truly and properly divine. If you wish to have a life of Christ that is ever fresh and ever fragrant, with all about it that is fitted to arouse to admiration and awaken to love, then give your time to the reading of the Gospels. There you will see Christ in all the full-orbed glory of a character that has every property and grace of a perfect humanity, with every attribute of God that is fitted to touch the human heart to devotion and love. If you wish to see and know Christ, turn to Him as He is set before you in the gospel. And then you will never lose sight of the glorious truth to which our text has so specially directed your attention—" *Truly this was the Son of God.*"

Let this fact of Christ's true and proper divinity,

which enters so essentially into the character of Christ's person and mediatorial work, be the matter of your firm and undoubted faith. Let it be a matter of the faith of your hearts. I know it is a doctrine of our creed. But remember it is the statement of the divine word: "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." The true knowledge of this precious doctrine, on which all right Christian faith hangs, is by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, for He alone brings the soul in contact with the mercy and grace of the Divine Redeemer, and makes the man experimentally to know that Christ is both the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. The faith that apprehends Christ as a Saviour knows Him to be truly and essentially divine, and hence can it rely on Him for pardon of sin, for purity of soul, for every blessing of grace, and for the promised inheritance of glory. It is its joy to hold and confess that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, for, believing, the soul has life through His name.

What comfort have you who believe, in resting by faith on a Divine Saviour, who by His suffering and death, while manifest in flesh, has accomplished your salvation! Rest on Him with humble confidence, and give to Him the warm and ever-increasing love of your hearts. For be assured of it, that, the more the soul is made to glow under the influence of love to Him, the more will the glory of His character as God-Man Mediator be revealed. It is only love that can comprehend love, and hence the prayer of Paul for the Ephesians, that, says he, "Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to

know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God." Seek, then, that by love you may drink deep into the love of Christ, and the more shall ye know that He is truly the Son of God.

In all the fulness of His divine love and mercy is Christ the Son of God made known to sinners for their salvation. But sad is it when men cast Him aside, turn from Him as a Divine Saviour, or, while they honour Him in their creed, have no place of honour for Him in their hearts. Not always will His voice of mercy be heard on earth, in all the earnestness of its compassionate love. It was heard on earth by men in the days of His humiliation, it is still heard by men in the preaching of the gospel, which is truly the pleading of Christ with sinners' souls, that they turn unto Him and live. But if that voice of love and mercy be not heard now, the time is coming when it shall again be heard, but it shall be at the bar of judgment, of destiny, and doom. Take hold of Him now by faith as the Divine Saviour, for, if you turn a deaf ear to the voice of His mercy, be assured that the issues of the judgment-seat shall only re-echo the voice of reason, of conscience, of affection, that thus gave forth their united witness at His cross on Calvary—" *Truly this was the Son of God.*" Amen.

XIII.

CHRIST'S FINAL VOICE TO SINNERS.

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”—REV. xxii. 17.

THE last words of a godly man are most generally both memorable and impressive. They seem to come from the lips of one who has bidden farewell to time, and has ceased to have any interest in the things of earth. These he has left far behind him. He has done with these for ever, and now away from the world, the words of the dying man seem like a voice from the unseen celestial city, almost within the reach of his soul's vision, and on which he is about to enter. We may expect such words to be memorable, for they are uttered by one now well able to weigh the value of both worlds in the scale, and over whose mind there is no veil of worldly attachment to dim the eye to their relative importance and worth. He who speaks on the very verge of eternity can scarcely be blind to the right estimate of earth and time. He who is about to leave earth for heaven is surely able to speak with impressive accuracy concerning the duty of those who are ere long to follow him into a world unseen. With his eye alike on heaven and earth, on the value of the soul and the importance of a saving interest in Christ, who alone can make sinful

men meet for the inheritance and enjoyment of a world of bliss, we expect to hear from a godly man's deathbed some parting word that shall abide with us for ever, some utterance so memorable and impressive as never to be erased from the page of the soul's remembrance.

The words that form the subject of our present discourse have very much the shape and character of a parting voice. They are the last words of our exalted Lord ere He seals the vision of prophecy, and retires into silence amidst all the glories of His throne. A few more sentences shall fall upon the human ear, and never more shall His voice be heard on earth, till, seated on the great white throne, He shall call men before Him to the bar of judgment. These words come to us with singular impressiveness. They are especially memorable from the depth of the earnestness they reveal that sinners should be blessed with the acceptance and experience of salvation. Could words more clearly discover the deep affection of the Saviour's heart, or more plainly show how full it is of touching tenderness and earnest compassion for fallen and guilty men? He would have them know that He delights to save; that His salvation is for the guiltiest and the vilest, without exception and without distinction; that His salvation is free to all as is the air of heaven, and as freely at the sinner's use as is the water of the full flowing stream where every one may drink. The last words from the cross at Calvary were the proclamation of a finished redemption. The last words from the throne are the free offer of a perfect salvation. These words of our text are given among the Saviour's last, for He would have them ever to be remembered, that by them He might win sinners to Himself. Last words generally reveal what lies nearest to the heart, and thus our Lord's last words set forth

that nothing can give such joy to His heart as that a sinner should receive Him by faith, rest on His mercy, and yield to His call of compassion and love. What a glorious close does such a voice make to the whole of the utterances of the divine record! Here the Saviour gives us to know that both heaven and earth join with Himself in His invitation to the sinner to come to Him for salvation and life. "*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.*"

Let us then look at this interesting statement of the divine word, and in doing so we shall notice—I. The call to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ it here makes; II. Those by whom it is given; and III. Those to whom it is addressed.

"*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*"

I. THE CALL TO FAITH IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WHICH OUR TEXT HERE MAKES.

The call here made is a call to come to Christ and participate in the blessings of His salvation. Christ is the fountain of life, and the water of life or living water sets forth Christ and all the blessings of His redemption and salvation. Christ thus, and the blessings He has secured for sinners' souls by His obedience, sufferings, and death of atoning sacrifice, are here brought before us by "*the water of life.*" This water of life is not simply living water, but it makes alive all who taste of its soul-refreshing and soul-gladdening stream. It not only gives life, it continues it, it strengthens it, it perfects it. The life it confers shall only be fully realized and enjoyed when they who have tasted and seen its life-giving power

here shall drink of it from that pure river clear as crystal, which proceedeth from the throne of God and of the Lamb in the sanctuary on high. It is living water overflowing in its abundance, for the mediatorial fulness of the Lord Jesus Christ is infinite. It can thus meet the wants of every sinner's soul. And then, infinite in fulness, no matter how many sinners may come to Him, they never can exhaust the fulness of Him who is the overflowing fountain of the water of life. Though thousands drink, the fountain is as full as ever, for Christ is a fountain infinite and exhaustless, perennial, eternal. There is enough in Him for every sinner. There is enough in Him for all sinners.

By the coming, to which reference is here made, is obviously meant the coming by faith to Christ as the Saviour, and partaking by faith in all the blessings of His grace. The words are a call to come to Christ and be saved through Him. The coming is equivalent to believing on Him. In the Gospel by John we find the Saviour Himself saying, "He that cometh unto me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." There, coming unto Christ and believing on Him have the same meaning, the same amount and extent of meaning. What, however, is implied in coming to Christ, and taking Him, the blessings of whose redemption are here represented by "*the water of life*"?

There are obviously two things implied in coming to Christ, and taking Him by faith, and experiencing through Him salvation and life.

1. *It implies the sinner's consciousness and belief of his own inability to meet his own case, and save himself.* It tells his faith in the truth that he cannot be saved in any other way than by Christ. It proclaims the conviction of his utter inability to meet his sad case of

spiritual necessity, to free himself from the guilt, the pollution, and the power of sin, and to quicken his own soul with spiritual life. Be assured of it, this sense of utter helplessness, this consciousness of utter hopelessness in ourselves, underlies all faith in Christ's ability to save. As long as any sinner looks to himself, to his own self-righteousness, to aught in himself, to aught that he can do,—he will never turn his eye to Christ, or trust in Him for salvation and life. If ever we look to Christ, it will be because we believe that, as sinners in ourselves, we are helpless and undone. It was because the woman afflicted with the issue of blood felt her case to be hopeless as far as all mere human help could aid her, that she sought to touch the hem of Christ's garment, that through Him she might be made whole. It was not till Peter's feet were sinking in the waters that his eye sought the Saviour, and he cried, saying, "Lord, save me." The felt consciousness, the undoubting conviction, the thorough faith in our own inability, underlies all true faith in Christ. It is implied in the expressive call here before us, "*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.*"

And let us say that it is the great design of the Divine Spirit, in His work of conviction, to lead the sinner, through the sight of himself, in the light of the law of God, which is holy, and just, and good, to produce this consciousness of utter inability—to lead him to see the valuelessness of all his so-called righteousness—to give him such knowledge of his guilt and vileness as to lead him to see that he is helpless, undone, and lost. Every sinner in his natural state requires to be taught the experience of the apostle, when he said, "I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came sin revived, and I died." When the law of God came home to his conscience in all its breadth, spirituality, and

extent, then did he feel himself to be in spiritual death, and exposed to all the danger and ruin of eternal death. Then did he die to all his own merit, to all his own self-righteousness. Then did he feel all to be utterly valueless and vain. He no longer felt himself to be rich and increased with goods, and standing in need of nothing. He now knew himself to be wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. This felt knowledge of what a sinner is in the sight of God's holy law is implied in the expressive call here before us, "*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.*"

2. *This coming and taking of the water of life implies faith in Christ, that we can be saved by coming to Him and taking Him as our Saviour, that there is salvation for sinners by coming and taking Him by faith.*—This coming implies faith in Christ's infinite ability, as an all-sufficient Saviour, able to save to the uttermost. It tells of the sinner turning to Him as He is revealed by God in the word of the truth of the gospel, which is the record or witness, or testimony of God concerning Him, and taking Him and trusting in Him as therein revealed, for present and eternal salvation. This is implied in coming to Christ, and taking Him as the water of life.

Now it need scarcely be said that Christ's all-sufficiency as a Saviour is the glory of the gospel. It is the great truth patent from every page of Scripture. It is intertwined with every doctrine of divine revelation. If you seek to take that great truth away from the divine testimony respecting Christ, you must take away every other saving truth along with it. It is the golden thread which runs up and down every page of the divine word, which holds all fast, and binds all together by a cord which can never be broken. Now, faith is the use-making of this glorious truth. To receive and rest on

Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour is faith's function and exercise. Coming to Christ is thus trusting the soul to Him as an all-sufficient Saviour, to be saved by Him on the terms of faith and free grace. This is the coming to Christ, and taking of Him as the water of life, that is here before us in this expressive call of our text, "*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.*"

II. THOSE BY WHOM THIS CALL IS GIVEN.—"*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come.*"

1. *This call is given by the Holy Spirit.* We have this on the authority of the Saviour Himself. And need it be said that it is especially important that guilty, polluted, and helpless sinners should know this. It is to be remembered that the great work of the Divine Spirit in the economy of grace is the application to sinners' souls of all the blessings of Christ's purchased redemption. It is His special work to regenerate the soul, to work faith in the sinner's heart, to enable him to lay hold on Christ for salvation and life. If, then, in the consciousness of utter helplessness, the sinner should be apt to despond and despair, how cheering is this voice of the Spirit of the ever-living God! He who here calls is that same one who makes the call effectual, and whose influences can be obtained by supplication at the throne of grace. God has promised His Holy Spirit to all who ask. "If ye then, being evil," says the Saviour, "know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him!" The Holy Spirit only awaits the voice of sincere prayer to send down His all-powerful and efficacious energy to enable the soul of the sinner to take Christ by faith, and live. Does He say, "Come," and

will He withhold the aids of His grace to enable the sinner to come, if he really will to come to Christ and be saved? There is not a more encouraging voice that can fall upon the sinner's ear, there is not one that should so deeply impress and affect his heart, as the voice of the Divine Spirit here before us, "*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.*"

The Holy Spirit entreats every sinner who hears the gospel to come unto Christ by faith and be saved. This He does by all the gracious invitations of the gospel which fall upon the ears of men, in which He beseeches them to take hold of Christ, and trust Him for all the blessings of His grace. This He does by all those influences of common grace by which He operates on the sinner's conscience and impresses his heart. He does it in every voice of mercy by whomsoever uttered, and by every voice of providence which brings the soul of the sinner in contact with the thoughts of death, and judgment, and eternity. He does it in every conviction of sin, in every alarm which reaches the sinner's soul, and in every awakening to the sight of the soul's danger and to the awful futurity on which the soul of the unsaved sinner must ere long enter. All that reaches conscience, all the voices of mercy that so tenderly address him, all the invitations of grace he receives, all the pleading, earnest beseechings of Divine love that fall upon his ear, and are so fitted to reach the heart, are only the revelation of the earnest concern of the Holy Spirit's entreating tenderness and love. Nay, the very warnings and threatenings which the sinner receives are only the Spirit's merciful expostulation with him, that he may come to Christ. All only reveal the love and mercy of Him who here says, "*Come.*"

2. *This call is given by the Church of Christ.* It is

here said, "*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.*" By the bride is to be understood the Church on earth, all the faithful in Christ Jesus, as also the redeemed around the throne, who join believers on earth in beseeching all who hear the gospel to come to Christ, to take hold of Him and live. The very position of blessedness and glory which the redeemed in heaven occupy is in itself a call to the sinner to accept Christ, for it tells that to the acceptance of Him they owe all the happiness they now enjoy and all the glory with which they have been blessed. The reference, however, is mainly to Christ's believing people on earth, so that earth joins with heaven in importunate and earnest entreaty that the sinner may believe and live. The Holy Spirit in heaven and the Church of Christ on earth here join in the same voice. There is an echoing and answering of heart to heart on the part of the Spirit and the bride, and both, like the strings of a well-tuned harp, give forth the same note, and join in the same impressive call: "*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.*"

Now the Church on earth says, "*Come to Christ,*" by all its ministers. For there is no gospel preaching that does not re-echo this call, and press it on the sinner's soul, "*Come to Christ.*" Take this voice from the pulpit, and it is the gospel pulpit no more. Preach aught else than Jesus Christ a Divine Saviour, and Him crucified, His death an atoning sacrifice in the room of guilty sinners, press aught else than the great gospel duty of faith upon the unbelieving sinner, say aught else than, "*Come to Christ ;*" and while multitudes may praise the preacher because he has cast all distinctive gospel truths behind him, yet dead souls will remain inanimate. All gospel preaching has only these great ends in view, to bring men to Christ, to keep men with Christ, to make

them like Christ, to take them home to be with Christ for ever. Hence the voice of all gospel preaching is, "*Come to Christ.*" The Church says, "*Come,*" by the voice of its individual members. No true believer can be silent with the experience that coming to Christ has filled his soul with spiritual joy. He would not desire to go to heaven alone. He cannot look upon men in sin and guilt, under the bondage of corruption, and exposed to eternal ruin, without being filled with pity; he cannot think of what he owes to Christ for his own deliverance, and yet remain a careless and unconcerned spectator of the danger to which he sees his fellow-men exposed. He must say, "*Come.*" Filled with love to Christ, and feeling deep concern for sinners' souls, alike with heart, with lip, and with life he gives the earnest invitation, "*Come.*" "*Come,*" for I have found the Lord to be merciful and gracious. "*Come,*" taste and see that the Lord is good. Then the Church says, "*Come,*" by all its ordinances, which proclaim the richness, freeness, and fulness of gospel mercy and grace. "*Come*" to the gospel table of blessing—for yet there is room. "*Come,*" there is room for you in the Church on earth. "*Come,*" there is room in the Church on high. Then the Church says, "*Come,*" by the lives of all true disciples, by their joy and peace in believing, by their activity in all Christian duty, by their patient endurance of trial, by their exertion in the cause of Christ, by their zeal and usefulness, by their self-denial and self-sacrifice, by their war with all iniquity, by their conflict with prevailing evil, by their uncompromising attitude respecting worldly customs and pleasures, by their concern for the cause of Christ and the glory of the Saviour's name. All only are the expression of their pressing invitation: "*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.*"

3. *This call is to be given by every hearer of the gospel who has this call given him.* He who is called is himself invited to call others. It implies that, having heard the call, he should accept the offered mercy, come to Christ and take Him by faith; nay, that having heard it, he is to proclaim to others what he himself has received. He is to say, "Come to Christ," and entreat sinners to lay hold on Christ, who is offered freely to the faith of every sinner's soul. Nothing could more clearly demonstrate the freeness of gospel grace than this duty which is laid upon all who hear: "*Let him who heareth say, Come.*"

You will thus see that the work of the extension of the gospel is not simply the work of office-bearers of the Church or ministers of the gospel. It is the work of every individual believer, nay, the voice of the gospel call is to be given by every one to whom the glad tidings of salvation has come. While God has committed to His believing people the cause of the gospel, and specially called upon them to bear His message to the ends of the earth, yet there is not one who enjoys any measure of gospel light and privilege who is not under the obligation of special command to join in the work, and to proclaim the freeness of gospel blessing, and invite sinners to come to Christ and drink of the full flowing streams of the water of life. If ye hear, then it is yours to say, "*Come.*" You may not say, Though I have heard, I fear I have not yet truly believed, and therefore I am freed from taking any part in missionary enterprise. If you have heard, the very hearing has placed you under solemn obligation to communicate the message you have received, and wherever you go to proclaim it. You cannot rid yourself of the duty, though you may not wish to regard it. You may do

nothing with your lips, and just as little with your substance, for the spread of the gospel, but there is the duty before you. Your conscience testifies to its power to bind it. You feel it. You own it. You cannot get rid of it. If you have heard the gospel, then here is the duty set before you: "*Let him that heareth say, Come.*"

III. THOSE TO WHOM THE CALL IS ADDRESSED.

1. *Those who are sensible of their need of Christ and salvation by Him are called.* The word says, "*And let him who is athirst come.*" By the words "him who is athirst" the Saviour brings before us the case of those who feel the need of salvation, who have been awakened to a sight and sense of sin, to its evil as separating between the soul and God, and bringing down upon the sinner condemnation and curse. Having been convinced of sin, of its guilt and danger, the soul of the awakened sinner is all intent upon deliverance. He is like the man passing over the desert under the burning rays of the eastern sun, and his soul fainteth in him for thirst. His eye earnestly seeks for the cooling fountain, that he may drink and be refreshed. He has been awakened to a sense of guilt. His conscience says unto him, "Thou art the man," and he seeks earnestly for a refuge from the storm and a covert from the tempest. He has been made to feel his vileness and pollution, and he is earnestly inquiring for a "fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness." He has been made to feel the burden of sin's bondage, and he is anxious for the help of one who may undo the heavy burden, and let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke. He is athirst for help and deliverance. Oh, how cheering is the voice of the Saviour that falls upon his ear: "*Let him that*

is athirst come." Let him come unto me and drink out of the fountain of the water of life, as the thirsty traveller would drink of the fountain in the desert on which he had lighted in his journey over the sandy waste. He will find no barrier in his way. He will find no obstacle which he needs to vanquish ere his soul be refreshed with all the blessings of pardon and deliverance. If he only thirst, let him drink. If only he need salvation, and feels that he needs it, let him take hold of Christ by the hand of faith, and his soul shall live.

Do you thirst for Christ, and for all the blessings of salvation through Him? Then, O sinner, listen, I pray you, to the Saviour's voice. You need no preparation to come if you only feel the need of coming. You require no merit of your own, for merit you have none. You need no longer delay that you may more deeply feel. Come as you are. Come with all your sin and guilt about you. You cannot come as a saint. You must come as a poor, polluted, guilty sinner, come when you may, if you ever come at all. Do you not feel your need as you ought to feel? Come and tell it all to Christ. Place your cold and unfeeling heart in His hands. He alone by His Spirit can quicken it with the energy of spiritual life. Remember that you will never so much feel your need of Christ as when you have fled to Him for refuge—that you will never feel your thirst so much as when you have drunk of the stream where living water flows, and been enriched with all the blessings of eternal life. If you cannot come as you wish, come as you are. Only come. If you are athirst, come. Remember that it is Christ's beseeching voice that falls upon your ear. He calls you with especial earnestness that you may come. He seeks that you come, for He is both able and willing to save you. Listen,

then, to His voice: "*If any man thirst, let him take the water of life freely.*"

2. *Every sinner who will, may come.* While he who is athirst is called to come to Christ, and take of the blessings of salvation through Him, there is a still wider and more comprehensive call, a call that is inclusive of all who will to come. The Saviour would not have one single soul to imagine that he is not included in His gracious call to come. "*And whosoever will,*" says He, "*let him take the water of life freely.*" Can anything be broader, wider, and more comprehensive than this? Can any one say that he is excluded from Christ and the blessings of divine grace, unless he excludes himself? Dare any one say that the Saviour does not include him in His gracious call, which is given to him as if he were the only sinner on the earth? If he be a son of fallen man, if he be a sinner with the mark of guilt upon him, exposed to condemnation and eternal death, to him is this gracious call given in all the tenderness of divine compassion and love: "*Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*"

Here, then, Christ tells us that whosoever will, may come, may take of the water of life, may come by faith to Him and take of the water of life, may participate in the blessings of His redemption and salvation. No matter who he be, whether high or low, whether rich or poor, bondman or free, Jew or Gentile, all are invited, all may come, and all are welcome. The invitation extends to each and to all. Laden though any sinner be with guilt, though he has committed the worst of crimes, though he be a robber like the thief upon the cross, though he be a persecutor like Paul, a murderer like Manasseh, who made the streets of Jerusalem to run red with innocent blood, or a woman of the city who was one

of the vilest of sinners,—yet the call of Christ is given personally and directly to him. The gospel table is open to the poor, the blind, the lame, to the guiltiest, the worst, and the vilest. His guilt does not exclude the sinner if he will only come. His former hard-heartedness and indifference will not exclude him, for whosoever will may come. This word, “*whosoever*,” is on the gate of gospel blessing, and lets in all who will. “*Whatsoever*” is on the inside of the gate, ensuring to all who enter all the blessings of grace and of glory. “Whosoever will” may enter, and “Whatsoever you ask in my name,” says the Saviour, “that I will do.” Do not then, O sinner, exclude yourself when this “*whosoever will*” gives you the gracious warrant and right to take the water of life freely.

3. *Christ and all the blessings of salvation by Him are freely offered, freely taken, and freely enjoyed, and this puts all sinners on the same platform in respect of the experience of gospel blessings.* Christ and all His blessings are offered to all to whom the call of the gospel comes, and they are free to all. While Christ is a Saviour suited to all and sufficient for all, it is the glorious truth concerning Him that He is free to all. Needed by all, He is free to all, and all the blessings of His salvation are freely given to all who come to Him by faith, and freely accept Him and the blessings of His grace. Christ and His blessings cannot be bought. They are given without money and without price. They cannot be merited, for the merit of the sinner tells only of guilt, condemnation, and death. Nay, God gives everything to man freely. He can buy nothing from God. Can he buy light from the sun, air from the atmosphere, water from the spring, corn from the earth, fruit from the tree. Do not all these come to him as God’s free gift? But

freer far is God's salvation, the salvation which Christ offers to the sinner's soul. Nay, all that Christ ever did for man He also did freely. He was not paid for healing the sick, for giving eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, cleansing to the leper, life from the dead. When He fed the multitudes, there was no bill of expenses. If thus He bestowed temporal blessings, do you think that men need to buy, or ever could buy, from Him the blessings of His salvation? Where is the price which the sinner could give for Christ and salvation by Him? What has he to give that he has not received? All he has is not his own, save sin and guilt; and can these ever be a price, when the very salvation Christ offers is to free the sinner from his sin and take all his guilt away? Thanks be to God that the Saviour invites and calls to a salvation that is offered and bestowed freely. All that the sinner has to do is to accept Christ and salvation by Him as the gift of free grace, to come to Christ by faith, to receive and rest on Him by faith, and thereby enjoy freely all the blessings of His benign salvation. Were aught of price attached to the coming to Christ and the taking of Him, the sinner would be lost for ever. But Christ and His salvation are free to him, free as the air he breathes, free as the water of the full-flowing stream to which he may repair and drink. How glorious then, O sinner, is this call which falls upon your ear: "*Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*"

IN CONCLUSION. What a glorious close is the call of our text to the whole revelation of divine mercy and grace! Could any close have been more appropriate? Here we have the heart of the Saviour revealed in all its tenderness of compassionate mercy, pleading for sinners' souls,

that they may come to Him by faith, and take Him, and participate in all the blessings of His redemption and salvation. If sinners are not saved, they cannot say that they are not called. They dare not say that they are not besought to take Christ by faith and live. The Holy Spirit says to every sinner who hears the gospel, Come to Christ. The Church, in all her believing disciples and holy ordinances, says, Come to Christ. Every gospel hearer is under obligation to give this gracious call in the Saviour's name. Nay, whosoever will may come. No one shall be able to lay the blame either of unbelief or eternal ruin at Christ's door. You cannot blot the words, "*Whosoever will*," out of the Bible. It is the warrant of every sinner to come to Christ, and the vindication of Christ's sincerity, that all men should come to Him and experience the blessings of His salvation. Come then, O sinner, at Christ's call; come and drink. The Saviour invites you, entreats you, commands you to come. Do not reject Christ's call, or turn a deaf ear to His pleading voice. You have delayed too long already. Remember that opportunities and calls may soon be gone, that the day of life is waning, that your sun may go down while it is yet day, that if you fail now to listen to the voice of mercy you may be left to your own way, to reap the wages of sin in eternal ruin. Oh, come to the Saviour at last! Remember it is the Saviour who says, "*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.*"

XIV.

CERTAINTY OF THE BELIEVER'S RESURRECTION.

“But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.”—ROM. viii. 11.

THERE is one spot that speaks to the living in solemn tones, and that is the place of graves. Go where you may, by the crowded city or the lonely hamlet with its church spire, the first thing that catches the eye in the landscape, and that you are sure to come upon, is the silent city of the dead. Nay, I have seen the solitary grave on the borderland of the American forest, and it was fitted to teach an impressive lesson to the soul. Crowded, moreover, as may be the populous city, with its thousands or even millions of inhabitants, it cannot compare in numbers with the dwellings in that silent city, to which all the living on earth are being borne by the ministers of death. There are far more in the graveyard of the hamlet than those that occupy its humble dwellings. All that tread the globe are but as a handful to the tribes that slumber in its bosom. Take the wings of the morning, the desert pierce, or lose thyself in the continuous woods, and yet the dead are there. And millions in these solitudes, since first the flight of years began, have laid them down in their last sleep. The dead reign there

alone. Then need I tell you that the sea is the largest of all cemeteries, and there its slumberers sleep without monuments. Other graveyards may show some mark of death, or even some distinction among the dead. But in the ocean cemetery all are alike distinguished. Still, over what a vast number of the great and small of our race, do the waves of ocean roll and sing in monotone their solemn requiem! The living are nothing to the number of the dead. What is our earth but a vast graveyard circling round the sun, containing in its bosom the sepulchred races of past generations. There do all nations meet as on the sea. Through the gates of the graveyard they are incessantly streaming to its loneliness and silence. Long as a man may be in reaching it, he enters the grave at last, and lies down to rise not till the heavens be no more.

Did you ever realize all this? You and I are hastening to the grave. Men's aims are various as the roads they take in journeying through this life. But they all come together in the grave at last. That is the appointed place of rendezvous where all these travellers meet. Every step we take is a step towards the tomb. Our hearts,

“Like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.”

Every Sabbath as it passes is lessening the distance between us and the sepulchre. Dear friends, that were wont to be with us on the journey of life, are gone. “Our fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?” We, too, must ere long enter death's dark gateway, and bid farewell to time and earth for ever.

By the door of death we enter on a new scene of existence, which is differently viewed by men according to their spiritual character and state. The natural man looks upon death with fear. The sinner, whose heart is enmity

against God, regards it with dread, for he knows it to be a summons to stand before the bar of God in judgment. To the natural man, the unregenerate man, thoughts of death and the grave are repulsive and dreadful. I know that by poetic fancy the grave has been pictured as a place of repose, to be longed for after the cares and troubles of life ; and you will find fools talk of escaping from sorrow by the near door of death. But he who depicts the sinner's grave as a place of repose, or thinks by getting quit of this present life that he may be quiet in the grave, will the one find that he has only feigned a repose which the sinner's future will never realize, and the other that he has stumbled into hell. It is only the believer in Christ, looking by the eye of faith on Him that hath abolished death and risen victorious over death and the grave, who can rise superior to all the fears of nature, and to all the dread which, in view of death, makes the guilty soul to tremble. While nature apprehends destruction by death, and dissolution by the grave, faith, with its eye on divine power and love, beholds that death has no might to prevent a resurrection. To meet all that dread which the unbelieving sinner feels in the view of death, faith, with its eye on Christ, lays hold on His atoning blood for comfort, and through Him apprehends eternal life, even under the mask of death. It finds that in Christ death has lost its sting and the grave its victory. Thus is it that, to the believer in Christ, the words of our text come with an especial power of consolation amidst all the darkness of death and all the visible desolation of the grave. Just as over the chaos of the world at the creation the Divine Spirit brooded with light and life, so do we here see Him brooding over all the darkness and desolation of the tomb. By these words of our text, as we gaze, we see all the darkness departing ; we

behold what was desolation shaping itself into new and glorious forms of life.

See truth, love, and mercy in triumph descending,
And nature all glowing in Eden's first bloom ;
On the cold cheek of death smiles and roses are blending,
And beauty immortal awakes from the tomb."

For it is written, "*But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.*"

Here, then, is a word which sheds sunlight into the dark recesses of the sepulchre, and makes the grave to be instinct with life. It dispels all the dark apprehensions of the believing soul as it gazes into the future, and contemplates the place of the body's long-continued rest. The grave, to the believing man, is a place of sweet repose, for the Saviour has been there ; nor will the time appear long when, in the morning of the resurrection day, he is quickened out of slumber. No matter though thousands of years have passed in the grave, it will only be to the body the short night of rest. The longest night of sound sleep seems short when we awake in the morning. In deep sleep there is no measurement of time. But however long the rest may be, the rising will come. Here we have the fact asserted, and an adequate reason for the fact assigned. Believers shall be raised up from the dead. Let us see the certainty of this great truth as here brought before us, and in doing so we shall notice—

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT'S INDWELLING, WITH WHICH THE RESURRECTION OF BELIEVERS IS HERE CONNECTED. "*If the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you.*"

The Holy Spirit, termed in the ninth verse the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ, ~~language expressive of personality and asserted deity, is here in our text~~ designated "the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead." The resurrection of Christ is thus ascribed to God the Father. ~~In the Word of God~~ it is also said to be the act of the Holy Spirit, and likewise the act of Christ Himself. ~~The resurrection of Christ was an act of divine power, and, like all other acts which terminate upon objects external to the Godhead, may be attributed to either~~ *we may* ~~of the divine persons. Hence it is said that "God raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God." The Saviour Himself says, "I have power to lay down my life, and power to take it again." It is also affirmed that Christ was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead." In our text the resurrection of Christ is said to be the act of the divine power of God the Father, and the Holy Spirit is said to be "the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead."~~

~~Now it is said that~~ the Holy Spirit dwells in believers as a spirit of life. "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you." This indwelling of the Divine Spirit as a spirit of life is the privilege of all believers. They are by nature in the common mass of corruption, dead in trespasses and sins, till the Holy Spirit, by regenerating grace, unites them through faith to Christ, enables and persuades them to embrace Christ as their Saviour, makes them the subjects of a new birth, and enters their souls with spiritual life. Subduing them to Christ in the day of divine power, as the Spirit of Christ He dwells in them. *"If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you."*

Now, in regard to this indwelling of the Holy Spirit in all believers, we have to notice—

1. *The Holy Spirit dwells in believers by His gracious presence.* Christ enters the hearts of all His people by the Spirit as their life. The Spirit's presence in them is the bond of their spiritual union to Him. Christ is in the hearts of all His people by His Spirit, and they are in Him by faith alive unto God. The Holy Spirit forms that union of the soul to Christ. While men remain in unbelief they are severed from Christ, and abide under the power of spiritual death. In the moment of faith, by the grace of the Divine Spirit, believers, as members of Christ's mystical body, are united to Him, their living Head. This union is accomplished in the day of effectual calling, when Christ by His Spirit enters their hearts, and they become temples of the Holy Ghost. "Know ye not that ye are temples of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Thus all believers have in them the gracious presence of the Divine Spirit. He dwells in them, the spring and principle of all their spiritual life, through their union to Christ, the source of all their strength and comfort and joy. Just as God condescended to dwell in all the glory of His gracious presence in the tabernacle and temple, so does the Holy Spirit condescend to dwell in the believer's heart in all the glory of His grace and love. It can be said of every believer in Christ, "*The Spirit of God dwelleth in you.*"

2. *The Holy Spirit dwells in believers by abiding residence.* In the day of effectual calling the Holy Spirit takes up His abode in the soul. He enters to make it His permanent dwelling-place. He does not call at the door of the heart and enter it for a brief stay. He enters the heart of the believer to dwell there. It is the place of His permanent abode. This, then, is the believer's glorious

privilege. The sense of the Holy Spirit's presence in the heart of the believer may not always be consciously felt, but the certainty of His abiding is secure. He that has formed the union of the believer's soul to Christ continues it. The nature of that union is the security of the Spirit's presence in the soul, the certain guarantee of His permanent abiding. Listen to the utterance of our blessed Lord: "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; which the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Rise, then, O believer, to the dignity, the glory, the joy of this wondrous indwelling of the Divine Spirit. Never was the earth so honoured as when God in human nature dwelt upon it. Think of the honour, the privilege of all the saints. God is in them. God, the Divine Spirit, dwells in them, their hearts are the place of His gracious, of His permanent abode. They are the temples of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. "*The Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead dwells in you.*"

3. *The Holy Spirit dwells in believers by His sanctifying power.* In the day of effectual calling the Holy Spirit enters the soul with regenerating grace. There is thus a mighty change effected upon the state of the soul, in the renovation of its faculties and in the infusion of a principle of spiritual life. This regeneration by the Divine Spirit issues in conversion, in the soul of the sinner turning to God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, in love to God, and in the choice of His service. But while the Holy Spirit, with regenerating grace, through faith in Christ, enters the soul, He dwells there, and He needs to dwell there, to carry on and complete the work He has begun. While holy principles in regeneration are infused,

the change produced upon the soul needs to issue in perfect conformity to Christ, in likeness to whom, and in presence with whom, is the believer's eternal glory and bliss. No grace is lacking in the regenerated man, no sinful inclination retains its sovereign sway, but all the graces of the Christian character are imperfect. Remaining depravity still harasses the believer's spirit, and sometimes, through temptation and the lack of Christian watchfulness, is found to prevail. There is thus need for the Holy Spirit's sanctifying, as well as His regenerating influences. It is by His sanctifying influence, through the divine word, that sin is mortified. It is by His sanctifying power, through the divine word, that spiritual life is strengthened and increased. By the Holy Spirit's indwelling and operation the believer grows in grace and holiness, the vigour of spiritual life advances, and the old life declines. It is by His fostering care that the babe in Christ grows in spiritual attainment, till he reaches the full stature of a perfect man in Christ. To make men like Christ, the perfect, complete, and glorious image of their exalted Head, the Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of all the Lord's believing people, that they may be fitted and prepared for the blessedness and glory of their eternal home. It is for this end, O believer, that the Holy Spirit dwelleth in you.

4. *The Holy Spirit dwells in all believers by His guiding and consoling grace.* This is only a special part of all sanctifying grace, but ever needed by the believer's soul. It might be imagined that when once the principle of grace was implanted there would be no further need of the Divine Spirit. We have reason to thank God that He abides in the soul for all the purposes of spiritual life. What would believers do without His guidance and help? How soon would they go aside and stumble and fall!

Living in a world of sin and temptation, of struggle and conflict with spiritual foes, amid all the sad experiences of sorrow and affliction, of bereavement and death, how could they be sustained without the guidance, the strength, and consolation of the Holy Spirit? But He dwells in their hearts to guide them into all truth, and lead their feet into the ways of peace. By His grace they are enabled to do and to bear the whole will of God. He is the Spirit of consolation, and how abundant is the comfort He furnishes in the hour of trial, when the heart is wounded with affliction, and the stricken spirit is called upon to sit in the darkness of the valley of the shadow of death! It is thus that believers endure affliction with patience, are enabled to joy in tribulation, have light in the dark and cloudy day of trial, have the smitten heart consoled in the time of sore bereavement, and can raise the voice of victory in the hour of death. All the guidance of the believer in life, all his consolation in trouble, all his strength and comfort on the bed of death, are bestowed on him by the grace of the Divine Spirit, through whom he is united to Christ, his all-sufficient Saviour, and who dwells in him the principle of his spiritual life, the minister to him out of the fulness of the Saviour's all-sufficient grace, and the security of his eternal glory. How much do you owe, O believer, to the Holy Spirit that dwelleth in you!

II. BY THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE CERTAINTY OF THE RESURRECTION OF BELIEVERS IS ASSURED. *"If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."*

Now, here it is to be observed that, notwithstanding

this indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers, and their union to Christ through faith in virtue of this indwelling, their bodies remain mortal and liable to death. The life which the Holy Spirit bestows upon man's complex nature is not all at once possessed. When we turn to the word of God, we find death brought before us in three different aspects. There is spiritual death, which consists in the separation of the soul from God and His love. Every unconverted man is thus dead in trespasses and sins, for he is without God. There is temporal death, which parts the soul from the body, closing our connection with time and earth for ever. There is eternal death, which consists in the everlasting separation of the soul from God and His love, and in the everlasting destruction of the sinner in his whole nature. Now, believers in Christ are delivered from spiritual death in the day of effectual calling, when God the Saviour, by the Holy Spirit, enters the heart with His love through the door of faith, and the man is made alive who was dead in trespasses and sins. Nay, in the moment of faith believers are delivered from eternal death, for they have passed from death unto life. Believing in Christ, they have everlasting life, though not until the great day of the Saviour's second coming shall they in their whole nature, body, and soul, be put in possession of everlasting glory. But, though made spiritually alive on their faith in Christ, their bodies remain mortal. These bodies fall into the grave by the stroke of death. Let it be remembered, however, that by the work of Christ temporal death is not for the punishment of sin, but for its destruction. To all the Lord's people it is not a curse, but a blessing. Death to them is swallowed up in victory. The day of death is not the day of the punishment of sin, but the day

of triumph over it. The death of the body is its preparation for immortality and incorruption. Just as the seed deposited in the earth so passes through death as to overcome it, springing up through death into a new life, so is it with the body that is laid in the grave. The bodies of believers do not perish through death. Temporal death parts the soul from the body, and transmits it to the glory and blessedness of heaven's eternal home. It is not, however, as the punishment of sin, or as the curse of the law, that it consigns the body to the grave. Its end or use is the extirpation, the destruction of the remains of sin in that body which dies that through death it may spring up to the perfect purity of physical life—a life immortal in the skies. The infusion of sin into our mortal bodies has so corrupted them that they need to be dissolved that they may be renewed. Just, then, as the grain is not quickened except it die, so does the body die and dissolve into dust, that it may be revived, reconstructed, formed anew, and fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, and again united to the soul, made perfect in holiness, so that the whole man, redeemed by the purchase of Christ's precious blood, may be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

God could have purified the believer's body from the effects of sin without death just as He shall change the bodies of those alive on the earth at the great day. But He has judged it meet, in the exercise of divine wisdom and mercy, that the believer's body should be subjected to the stroke of death. It leads the believer to view sin with abhorrence. It gives him to feel how Christ's precious blood can deprive death of its sting. It conforms him to Christ his living Head. It is only consistent with the principle of God's providential acting, which points to the future as the time of the manifesta-

tion of the sons of God. Thus the believer in Christ, the possessor of eternal life, the heir of eternal glory, needs to pass through the valley of the shadow of death. His body is still mortal. It falls before the stroke of death, and must become a tenant of the tomb.

But though the body of the believer, being mortal, must undergo the stroke of death and be laid in the grave, our text asserts the certainty of its resurrection. And here we are called to observe:—

III. ON WHAT THE CERTAINTY OF THE BELIEVER'S RESURRECTION RESTS, AND HOW IT IS ASSURED.

1. *The certainty of the believer's resurrection is assured by the agency that is pledged to effect it.* That agency is divine. It is the power of God exercised through the operation of the Divine Spirit that dwells in believers. That power shall quicken their dead bodies from the sleep of death. "He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

Now, to effect the quickening of the dead body such agency is needed. Here it appears from the text that in the resurrection the bodies of believers as to their substance will be the same as those that died. The mortal bodies that died are the bodies God shall quicken. Just as He raised up the body in which Christ died from the tomb, so shall He raise up the bodies of all His people. Job could say, "Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out its dead." As the body has been the instrument of the soul in this world, so shall it

participate with the soul in the happiness of the next. That body shall be raised. There is sufficient energy in the exercise of divine power to effect it. No matter how the members of the dead may have been scattered, no matter through what changes the dead body may have passed, though, as in the case of many a martyr, it has been consumed by fire and its dust borne away on the wings of the wind to every quarter under heaven, yet in its substance shall it be quickened by the power of God. Nor shall the soul of the believer be at any loss to recognise its former abode, to which it was linked by the closest and the tenderest ties. The body "is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." Yet of the mortal body it is affirmed that it shall be quickened into life. Christ's resurrection is the pledge that it shall be assuredly effected, and the proof that divine power is able to effect it. Just as God raised up Christ to die no more, so shall He raise up the bodies of His people. Nay, "if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some that there is no resurrection of the dead?" How can any man deny that to be possible which has already been exemplified? He shall quicken your mortal bodies. All things are possible to divine power. If, then, the power of God be pledged to secure the resurrection of believers, we may assert, with the unwavering confidence of faith, that their mortal bodies shall be raised, though it be after the sleep of centuries, from all the darkness and desolation of the tomb.

2. *The certainty of the resurrection of believers is assured by the congruity of the act with what divine power has already effected.* It is only a congruous act in Him who

raised up Christ from the dead to quicken the mortal bodies of His people by His Spirit that dwells in them. Let it be remembered that Christ died and rose as the covenant Head of His people. In the eye of God's law they died in His death and rose in His resurrection. If, then, Christ be raised from the dead, the mortal bodies of His people cannot remain in the grave. The resurrection of the Head is a legal resurrection which involves the actual resurrection of all the members of His mystical body. He that raised up Christ, by that very act assured the certainty of the resurrection of all who are united to Him by the indwelling of the Divine Spirit. They too must be raised, bearing in their bodies the image of the second man, the Lord from heaven, the bodies of their humiliation being fashioned like unto His glorious body, not only radiant in beauty, but adapted to all the glory of their spiritual state. Just as on the Mount of Transfiguration Christ's face did shine as the sun and His garment was white as the light, so shall the righteous shine in the kingdom of their Father. As Christ was raised, so shall His people be raised. As was Christ's resurrection body, as now is His glorified body, so shall the bodies of His people be when raised from the dust of death; they shall once more be united to their souls now made perfect in holiness. Completely conformed both in body and soul to Christ's glorious image, they shall be put in possession of the heritage of an endless life.

3. *The certainty of the resurrection of believers is assured by the indwelling of the Divine Spirit, through whose agency it is accomplished.* This indwelling is the climax to the proof of the certainty of the resurrection, for it links the mortal bodies of believers to the divine power, and ensures its exercise. Hence, says the apostle, "He shall

quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." It is to be remembered that the Spirit of God who dwells in believers is the life of the whole man. He unites the believer, body and soul, to Christ, for both body and soul are the matter of the Saviour's purchase. To both body and soul does the Divine Spirit apply the blood of Christ's atoning sacrifice for all the purposes of life, that both body and soul may be put in possession of eternal life and glory. Christ, through the Spirit's indwelling, is the life of the soul, and that same indwelling is both the pledge and the assurance that the body of the believer cannot remain under the hand of death and in the dark recesses of the grave. It were derogatory to the power, the majesty, and glory of the blessed Spirit to allow these bodies in which He dwells as His temple to lie for ever in the ruins of the sepulchre. The Spirit of life cannot permit the abode of His presence to be the prey of dissolution, to remain for ever under the reign of death. The bodies of believers shall be raised up by Him in glory and endued with the power of an endless life. Their resurrection is assured in virtue of His indwelling, and of their relation through Him to Christ their living Head. That Holy Spirit is in Christ the Head, and in all believers the members of His mystical body. The life that is in Christ is through Him the life of all His people, and thus the believer's body, which is His temple, and on which He has set Christ's blood,—the mark of life,—and in which He now dwells, must be rescued by Him from the empire of death, and be raised victorious over death and the grave. Christ's people have their resurrection assured by the indwelling of the Divine Spirit. "*He shall quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.*"

Thus you see that believing relation to Him who is

the God of life, to Him who is the Lord of life, to Him who is the Spirit of life who dwells in believers, ensures the certainty of their resurrection from all the darkness and corruption of the grave. You may not only with comfort contemplate a godly man's death, as by the eye of faith you behold the emancipated spirit borne on the wings of angels to the joy of the Saviour's immediate presence and to the glory of heaven's eternal rest, but even with joyous anticipation you may stand by the grave's mouth, as by the eye of faith you see the light of this word irradiating all its darkness. There is a power of life connected with that mortal body of the believer, in virtue of the Spirit's indwelling, which is sufficient and shall yet be efficient to its quickening. Look on it as it lies in the grave, or gaze on it when dissolution has crumbled it to dust, and though its form be no longer discernible, yet with that body and with every particle of its dust the Divine Spirit is linked by His indwelling, the pledge and the assurance of its being quickened into life. That body must be raised by Him who is a Spirit of life to the whole man, and whose office it is to put the believer's body and soul in possession of the eternal life and glory which is the promised possession of the whole Church of God which He has purchased with His blood. "*He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.*"

IN CONCLUSION. This subject is one of special comfort to believers in the view of death. While their bodies are dead because of sin, while they must fall before the stroke of temporal death because the marks of sin are on them, and for sin's extinction within them, yet they are not the property of death. They are, body and soul, Christ's purchased property; they belong to Him

who has conquered, who has abolished death. Nay, they are the temples of the Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of life. They are in the safe keeping of Him who hath redeemed them, and of Him who, by His indwelling, applies redemption to them, that theirs may be the enjoyment of eternal life and glory. They shall thus be raised to the possession of immortal life. Wherever the dust of the believer reposes, Christ's eye is on it, and Christ's Spirit is connected with it. Nay, Christ's blood is on it. It is His by purchase. Christ's Spirit claims it as His possession. Because Christ lives, and Christ's Spirit dwells in you, ye shall live, both body and soul. Death is the soul's departure to be with Christ, and the sight of Him is to be like Him. Perfect in holiness, it enters upon glory. Death is the body's departure to the grave, to its quiet resting-place till the day of the adoption, the day of its redemption, the day of the manifestation of the sons of God, when the Lord of life shall stand over the dead, and they that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and hearing shall live; when the Spirit of life shall quicken their mortal bodies and raise them up, so that the whole man, redeemed by Christ's blood, in body and soul the perfect image of the Lord of life, may be presented before God's throne with songs of exceeding joy.

It is a special comfort to contemplate the truth here set before us, as we mourn over the dead whose bodies have been borne to their last resting-place. These bodies, consigned to the grave, shall not for ever remain the property of death and the prey of corruption. True, the grave to the believer is a bed of quiet rest after life's long and weary journey. He is kindly resting on the lap of earth. After life's fitful fever he sleeps well; he sleeps in Jesus. But because his sleep is deep, because

he wakes not at the voice of thunder, nor at the moving of the earthquake, shall his sleep never be broken? Long as it may be, the sleep of the grave shall soon be over, and then comes the awaking. The Lord of life shall wake the dead to life; the body and soul shall again be reunited. Then shall commence the reunions and everlasting communion of all the Lord's people in the sanctuary on high. Then, like the Lord, they shall be ever with the Lord. They shall, body and soul, enter on a bliss as glorious as it is eternal. Amen.

XV.

NO TEARS IN HEAVEN.

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”—REV. xxi. 4.

TEARS are the symbol of sorrow. The moistened eye and the falling tear are distinctive of distress. When we gaze upon a face bedewed with tears, we require nothing more to tell us that we have come within the atmosphere of a sorrowing heart. Nor do we seldom witness such significant intimations of grief. A world in tears might be a very appropriate title-page to the history of human life.

Tears are sometimes shed through excess of joy. Yet a tearful joy is ever akin to grief. It requires but little analysis of the human heart, and far less of human experience, to know with the wise man that even in laughter the heart is sorrowful. Tears of joy are ever allied to sadness, and only well out of the memory of past distress. Nay, there are sorrows that are too big for tears, there are griefs beyond the power of weeping, just as sometimes tears may freely flow though grief has made no deep or lasting impression on the heart. There are often tears shed for imaginary sorrows, and neither sympathy nor tears for real and unequivocal distress. Yet if we are to write the history of this earthly scene, we must describe it as a world of weeping.

Tears in all eyes is but a compend of the experience of human life.

Our text invites us to contemplate a far different scene. The writer of the Apocalypse here unveils the upper sanctuary to our view, and in glowing language informs us that there the sorrows of time are unknown, that happiness without alloy awaits God's children in their Father's house, that the Saviour's perpetual residence with them shall close their sorrows and consummate their eternal bliss. Shadowing forth the perfection and glory and happiness of that better world, he describes it by a contrast that can well be appreciated by those who live in a world of weeping: "*And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*"

The description here given of the happiness of heaven is negative, for it is rather by negative statement than by any positive description that we can be made to gather any right conception of the blessedness and glory which shall be the portion and possession of the saints above. Here we can only think of good as the absence of evil, of joy as the termination of sorrow, of happiness as the close of distress. These ideas are blended in our thoughts, and cannot well be dissevered in our experience. That we who live in a world of suffering and sorrow may have some faint conception of the glory and blessedness of our eternal home, it is enough thus to say, "*And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*"

This negative view of heaven's blessedness is well fitted to affect and influence the heart. No tears in heaven; no, for there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain there. How delightful to rest in reflection upon such a scene! How fitted is the contemplation of it to

console the Christian man's spirit, and cheer him over all the pathway of his present pilgrimage! Can he think of the scene without the desire to reach it? Can he contemplate its blessedness without seeking meetness for its enjoyment? Are not these words sufficient for patience, perseverance, quickening, and comfort: "*And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*" Notice, then—

I. THE PRESENT STATE OF THE BELIEVER IS ONE OF TEARS.—His present pilgrimage is one of tears. While he has causes of sorrow that are common to him with all men, he has afflictions that are peculiar to him as a child of God. His faith in Christ does not make his heart insensible to sorrow nor impervious to distress. Nay, it may be safely affirmed that, while Christian faith sheds the sunlight of divine promise over the soul in the dark hour of sorrow, and secures submission and resignation to the will of God, it rather intensifies than deadens the power of feeling—it rather quickens than blunts the sensibilities of the heart. Nor are tears of sorrow, when the heart is smitten, either forbidden by Christian faith or inconsistent with the spirit of Christian resignation to the will of God. Let it never be forgotten that it is written of our kind, compassionate, and loving Lord, as He stood beside the grave of Lazarus in the midst of a company of mourners, "Jesus wept." Nay, it is the glory of our Christian faith, not that it forbids the tears of genuine sorrow, but that it consoles the sorrowing heart. If the Saviour wept, it can neither be unmanly nor unbecoming in any disciple with a wounded heart to weep; for his life below is but a seed-time of tears. Hence notice—

1. *The present state of the believer is one of tears,*

because he is living in a world of sin. Sin is the explanation of tears. Never had a tear been shed, never had a heart been sorrowful, never had a pain been felt, never had a single pang of suffering been experienced, never had a throbbing heart been stilled by the cold hand of death, but for sin, which brought death into our world, and all our woe. Sin entered into the world and sorrow seized it, and tears became the close and constant companion of human life. Had man remained unfallen, had earth been unburdened by the curse and human nature by the consequences of sin, never would we have felt sorrow, nor our eyes have been dimmed with tears. Tears tell of sin as well as of distress.

This world is a world of sin, and thus a world of sorrow. The believer is in sorrow because of sin. While God is loved, the Saviour served, and His law honoured, the believer's heart has yet to mourn over the defectiveness of his service, and not infrequently over his lapses into sin. What sighing has he over cold affections, over weakness of faith and want of holiness! And then, if God hide His face from him, can he be otherwise than troubled? The pathway of the believer is seldom free from clouds. A time of sunshine is too often followed by shade. Imperfection and sin make this world to the believer a world of tears.

Nor is his own sin alone the cause of his sorrow. He is no unaffected spectator of the unbelief and ungodliness and wickedness of his fellow-men. What sorrow fills his heart as he sees those that are near and dear to him living in sin, trifling with their souls' eternal well-being, turning a deaf ear to the voice of divine mercy, despising Christ and the blessings of His salvation! Nay, how does he mourn over the wickedness of hardened transgressors, and cry for all the abominations that are done

in the land ! With the Psalmist he can say, " Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not Thy law." The sight around him of sinning men makes this world to him a world of tears.

2. *The present state of the believer is one of tears, because he is in a world of suffering.* Suffering is the fruit of sin. Had the world been unstained by sin, there had been no footprint upon it of suffering and sorrow. Because of sin, suffering has an inlet through our whole nature, and is the chief burden of its history. It rises up like mist out of the landscape, to darken the whole scene of our present pilgrimage. It comes to us through every personal, domestic, and social relationship of life.

Think of the suffering that enters even the believer's dwelling when he experiences the stroke of adverse providence. While privation is wholly consistent with God's paternal care and pity, yet often is poverty a source of sorrow to the believer's heart. Look at the poor widow and her fatherless children, whom God has bereft of her chief earthly support—think of her anxious spirit, as she stands face to face with all the difficulties and trials of life, and need you wonder, though she be a child of faith, that her heart is often filled with sadness and her eyes with tears ?

Then how often is the believer made to suffer from the stroke of relative bereavements ! Domestic ties and social relationships, when sanctified by grace, are special blessings ; but how often do they become the occasion of poignant sorrow to the heart ! Here is a mother that mourns her child in death. God has sealed up the fountain of her daughter's life by the icy hand of the destroyer, and oh, how sad and sorrowful is that loving mother's heart ! Here is the father, whose spirit was gladdened by the

thought that his son would be the stay of his age, the comfort of his declining years, and he has just left that son's last resting-place in the silent land—the sunless and starless city of the dead. Here is the husband whom God has bereft of the desire of his eyes by a stroke, and there the wife whom death has robed in the weeds of widowhood. No longer is she cheered by the presence of him who was the light of her dwelling and the gladness of her heart. It is as if the sun had gone down while it was yet day, or become shrouded in the sackcloth of an untimely eclipse. She misses the accustomed presence. The cheerful face, the well-known voice, the kindly hand, and the loving heart are gone. No wonder that, as a widow, she sits in sorrow, and that her eyes are filled with tears.

And then, how often has the believer to sorrow over personal infirmities and afflictions! His faith in Christ gives him no reprieve from affliction, though it enables him by grace becomingly to bear it. How often is he laid down with severe pain, and made to water his couch with his tears! How often is he racked with sore distress, and full of tossings to and fro, until the dawning of the day! Nay, how often does he sigh under the infirmities of age, and find old age to be but grief and labour! It tells only of sorrow and tears.

3. *The present state of the believer is one of tears, for the world in which he lives is a world of death.* Death is the wages of sin. Death reigns because men have sinned. Co-extensive with the range of life is the presence and the power of death. As a curse death is inseparable from sorrow. Even where unstinged, it tells of pain, of suffering and tears.

While through grace, and by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the believer is able to meet death with composure, it is not to be supposed that faith uproots all the feelings

that are native to the human heart. The believer may meet, and does meet, death as a Christian, but he also meets death as a man. Death to the man is a trial, while to the Christian it may be a triumph. To depart and to be with Christ is far better; but think you that the Christian has no sorrow in parting with friends here? Even in the light of the glory of an almost revealed heaven, it is no small trial to part with loving friends around a dying bed. Can we wonder to see the tear in the eye of the dying saint as the last farewell is uttered, ere with feeble voice, yet with the firm confidence of faith, he commends his soul into the hand of the Saviour who hath redeemed him, and that, too, even while rejoicing in the near prospect of being ever with the Lord? Ah, brethren, the Christian, even the Christian, has his tears at the deathbed as well as his triumph. While he leaves the world in faith, he leaves it with a tear. His very last experience of the world, ere he leaves it for the glory and happiness of heaven, only tells that the present state of the believer is one of tears.

II. THE FUTURE STATE OF THE BELIEVER IS ONE IN WHICH THERE SHALL BE NO TEARS.—This description of the better world is designed to be a special comfort to us amidst all the sufferings and sorrows of time. Heaven is a place unsullied by a tear. “*God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*” Here you see that—

1. *This removal of tears is directly traceable to God.* Only God can effectually wipe away tears, for He only effectually removes their cause. Even now, if there be a breathing-time from sorrow, if there be a release from trial, if there be a consolation that reaches the heart, we trace it to the God of all comfort. “When He giveth quietness, who then can give trouble?” But when He

giveth sorrow, who then can stay the billows of distress ?

The blessedness of the better world, a blessedness unalloyed by sorrow, is based on the Saviour's sacrificial death. It is traceable to God, for He provided the Lamb for the burnt-offering. It is enjoyed through grace in virtue of the Saviour's blood, and God bestows it through the pardon of the believer's sins, and by giving him a right and title to eternal life. It is essentially inseparable from purity, and God sanctifies through His grace every soul that partakes of it. It is beyond the reach of sorrow, for it is with the hand of a Father who delights in the happiness of his children that "*God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*"

2. *This removal of tears is complete.* "God shall wipe away *all* tears from their eyes." God is even now the spring of the believer's consolation, the source of the believer's joy. Many a tear does God wipe away, many a sorrow does He alleviate, many an affliction does He enable him to bear, many a distress does He remove. How often does the believer need to go to God, and never does he go without the enjoyment of sympathy and help. Never does the Lord leave him alone and comfortless in the hour of his distress. God has ever pitied them that fear Him, as a father pitieth his children. God has taken him in His arms and wiped away many a tear.

God has wiped away many a tear here, but He has not wiped away all tears. He has not said that there shall be no more sorrow, nor affliction, nor bereavement. The believer cannot say the winter is past, and the rain is over and gone. The storm of life has not yet spent its fury. The clouds will return after the rain. But in the future world every source of sorrow shall have gone. "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying,

neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things have passed away." There shall be joy and thanksgiving and the voice of eternal praise. "*For God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*"

3. *This removal of tears shall be for ever.* Sorrow here may be followed by the sunshine of joy, but seldom does the sunshine continue. The believer is either at the beginning or the end of a trial. He is either expecting or bearing some burden of distress. The calmness of his spiritual day is never lasting. If the morning has risen in brightness, the evening may close in gloom. But never shall sorrow enter nor one single tear be shed in the abode of bliss. Never shall heaven's sky be clouded nor heaven's bliss be interrupted by one single moment's experience of the vicissitudes of time. "*God shall for ever wipe away all tears from their eyes.*"

III. THE REASON WHY THE FUTURE STATE OF THE BELIEVER SHALL BE A STATE FREE FROM TEARS.

1. *The future state shall be a state free from tears because of the believer's personal presence with Christ.* Christ's presence is the glory of heaven. Without Christ there, heaven to the believer would be lacking in bliss. Absence from Christ is sorrow. Presence with Christ is joy. Christ is the object of the believer's love. Christ is the centre of the believer's hope. The thought of being with Christ fills the believer's soul with gladness, and to be with Him for ever is the believer's glory and bliss.

Christ is the bridegroom, and the time of separation from Him is the time of mourning. Find the believer when you may, he mourns an absent Lord. He lives now in hope of the Saviour's coming. But not always shall he live only in hope, and look forward to the dawning of a brighter day. The hour shall come when

hope shall have its brightest visions realized, and expectation shall give place to fruition and glory. The Saviour shall take the believer home. At His own time, not one moment too soon, at the best time, not one moment too long or late, He shall come, and then shall rise on the believer's soul that day of glory whose sun shall never set. "I will come again, and receive you to myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which Thou hast given me." And so shall they ever be with the Lord. No tears shall be shed in His presence. The days of mourning are for ever ended. *"God hath wiped away all tears from their eyes."*

2. *The future state shall be a state free from tears, because it is a state of personal perfection.* We know but little of heaven as a place, but we know that it is a state of perfect holiness. Though the believer be marked with imperfection here, yet at death he is made perfect in holiness, for without holiness no man shall see the Lord. No being with any stain of impurity can stand before God in the upper sanctuary of the sky. The believer dies in the faith of being made perfectly holy on the beatific vision of the Lord. When he sees Him he shall be like Him, for he shall see Him as He is. Every element of sin, every stain of corruption shall pass for ever away from him when bathed in the full brightness of the glory of the blessed Redeemer, and then shall the truth of our text be gloriously realized, to the believer's eternal blessedness and joy: *"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."*

3. *The future state shall be a state free from tears, for it shall be a state of renewed union and communion with Christian friends for ever.* Earth is made sad by separations. The air is full of farewells to the dying and mournings for the dead. Every object is coloured by

associations of sorrow ever recalling the visions of the past. The light of memory ever falls on ruins. The record of memory is only the record of what we have lost. Earth is but the scene of partings and tears.

It is the comfort of the believer's heart, that what earth loses by the death of Christian friends, heaven gains, and he shall gain, too, when he reaches the happy shore where death-divided friends do meet, and meet to part no more. Nay, is it not a joy to him to think that he is expected there, that his coming is looked for there, that there he shall find those whom he loved on earth, and still loves with tenderest affection, when he reaches the land of his eternal rest?

There are some who speak of heaven as if we should know less of our friends there than what we did on earth, as if our fellow-believers should there be unrecognised, as if they who knew each other on earth might be unknown to each other in the realms of bliss. I wonder where any man could find grounds for such belief. It springs not out of man's nature, for every sympathy and longing of the heart repels it as taking from heaven one of the especial sources of its joy. Men are not constrained to such a belief because any faculty of the soul has become less robust in its exercise, because memory has failed to do its office, or consciousness forgotten its former self. What is heaven but the perfecting of man's mental and moral nature? Such a belief is not supported by God's blessed word, for it tells us that men shall see and know those whom they have never seen or known before. Even the very wicked shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God, though themselves be shut out. While the joy of heaven is communion with the Lord, shall it not be a matter of gladness to the believing man's spirit that those whom he so dearly loved

on earth are there to share it? Will it not fill his heart with joy to have by his side those whom on earth his heart so tenderly cherished, with whom he took sweet counsel, and who by grace had been the means of gladdening the pathway of his earthly pilgrimage? Will it not awaken the rapturous emotion of his soul to renew the communion which death had interrupted, and which heaven has restored? I should need to change my whole nature before I could believe that heaven will not repair the loss of earth by giving me those whom at God's bidding I have given to swell the song of praise that is ever ascending around the throne. No, they are all ours, and we shall see them again and know them again when we enter into that happy place where there is pain no longer, and death no more. "*There God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.*"

4. *The future state is a state free from tears, for it is a state of unalloyed happiness.* I dwell not now on the glory and blessedness of the bright and happy land where praise is the especial exercise. Here in this scene, praise is the associate of prayer. Prayer speaks of want; praise, of want supplied. Prayer tells of the need of help; praise, of help given. Prayer is thus the utterance of necessity. Praise is the voice of thanksgiving. Prayer is distinctive of imperfection. Praise is peculiar to perfect bliss. As the redeemed in heaven have no sin, no sorrows, no enemies, they pray not, but they praise, and their exercise proclaims their perfect holiness and happiness, their unalloyed joy and eternal glory. No more shall sin defile them, no more shall the sorrows of time disquiet them, no more shall the enemies of time disturb them, no more shall death visit them. Never shall they be severed from Him in whose presence there is fulness of joy. "*God hath wiped away all tears from their eyes.*"

IN CONCLUSION. What comfort does this subject furnish to mourners in Zion? It falls like the dew of blessing on the sorrowing heart. There is another world of happiness and glory to which their every footstep is tending, and where all of them shall yet be convened to join together in the anthems of its eternal praise. How fitted is such a truth to cheer us in our present pilgrimage! How does the thought of it enrich and ennoble the poverty of time! Lift up your heads, ye righteous, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh. Yet a little more struggle with sin, yet a little more experience of sorrow, and then all your sin and sorrow shall be for ever ended in the light and glory of heaven's eternal day.

While such are the hopes that cheer the just, and these hopes our God has given, how sad to contemplate a far different scene! There is, brethren, as we know on the testimony of the Divine Spirit, a place of eternal weeping, a place of everlasting wailing. Oh, what a scene of sorrow does such an utterance of the divine word reveal! To save us from it the Saviour bled and died on Calvary, and only through Him can salvation from it be secured. By the terrors, then, of the Lord, as well as by the manifestation of His love, be persuaded to trust Him, to cast your sins upon Him, and yours shall be all the happiness and glory of that place, where, to be like Christ, and to be with Christ, and with all His people for ever, will be its joy and glory and bliss for evermore.

XVI.

DOXOLOGY OF PRAISE TO CHRIST.

“Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”—REV. i. 5, 6.

I REMEMBER some years ago of visiting the church of St. Peter and St. Paul in St. Petersburg, where repose the remains of the Emperors of Russia. The simple coffins are placed in the church, and over them there is nothing further in the shape of monument than the name of the dead upon the coffin, which is covered by a pall. I was anxious to see the coffin of the Emperor Nicholas, and expressed my wish in German to the attendant. Moving forward, he unceremoniously and hastily took the pall from the coffin and whirled the coffin somewhat round to present the name on the coffin-lid rightly to the eye, and thereon I read the name of Nicholas, the Emperor of All the Russias. As I thought of the pride and haughtiness of him whose remains lay within, and of the unceremonious way in which these remains had been shaken by the hand of one who while he lived durst scarcely have looked him in the face, there vividly flashed before my mind, amidst all the remembrance of his defiant arrogance and lust of power and widespread dominion, the remarkable utterance of the prophet Isaiah :

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cast down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! . . . They that see thee shall narrowly consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof?" There before my eye was not only the far-reaching lesson of human frailty and mortality, but the end of all human pride and power, in a light the most impressive and affecting. There lay one of the mightiest and haughtiest monarchs of our day, and none so poor as do him reverence. His glory and dominion had withered from the world.

Men were wont in ancient times to address the throne in language designed to shade from the eye what has ever taken away the tinsel from mere earthly glory and the false glare from all earthly dominion, when they said, "O king, live for ever!" All such attempts to hide from men's eyes the real worth of earthly glory, however great, and of earthly dominion, however mighty, become singularly insufficient as you view them by the light of the sepulchral lamp in the chambers of the dead. Human glory is there stripped of all its witchery, and human dominion of all its fascination, in the presence of death. Time writes sad wrinkles on the face of all the idolatry of man, on all his idolatry of regal thrones and earthly dominions. The grave, however, as it is the last, so is it the truest teacher, for it tramples thrones and dominions in the dust. When he speaks, human glory vanishes and human dominion is prostrated for ever. The mightiest monarch, with all his pomp of royalty and pride of power, is there not more noble than any of his meanest subjects. Under the ground precedency's a jest. There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the

weary be at rest. The small and the great are there, and none either smaller or greater than his fellow. There the beggar is the equal of the king. Stripped of all his glory and dominion, "Surely there's not a dungeon slave that's buried in the highway but lies as soft and sleeps as sound as he."

From the tomb of earthly kings and the grave of earthly dominions what a light comes to illustrate the utterance here before us in our text! The words of our text reveal a throne whose foundations are indestructible, whose glory cannot be dimmed by the dust of decay, and whose sceptre of dominion can never be reached by any stroke of death. Before it, all human grandeur loses its lustre, and all human glory is eclipsed. It reveals a monarch to whom it ascribes "*glory and dominion for ever and ever.*" Not only does faith here in this doxology of praise bow before the Saviour and confess Him to be King of kings and Lord of lords, but with eye undimmed it gazes on regal ruins and national desolation, on crumbling thrones and departing dynasties, upon the universal mouldering of things until time has melted into eternity, and nothing of earth is left save man, and each man the equal of his fellow; for all human thrones have been cast down, and points to that throne as the only throne of the universe, and to Christ as the only monarch, the monarch of eternity. Now while human glory and dominion have their short day of time, the glowing heart of faith ascribes to Christ glory and dominion, the only glory and dominion worth the name. But this is not all. Planting its firm foot on the shores of eternity, and leaving far behind it all time's glory and dominion, it there sees that throne of the Saviour still, the only throne which eternity shall know, and, delighting to contemplate Him exalted to the highest

glory and dominion as He sits upon it, the sole Monarch of eternal ages, to whom every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord, it thus breathes forth its delight, its gratitude, and its prayer in these emphatic words here before us: “*Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*”

Here, then, in this passage we have two things that require our attention. It is a doxology of praise to Christ, and it becomes us to notice—I. The matter of it; II. The manner of it. “*To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*”

I. THE MATTER OF THIS DOXOLOGY OF PRAISE TO CHRIST.

1. *It ascribes to Christ glory.* While John in the isle of Patmos was by the eye of faith contemplating Christ in the glory of His person, and offices, and work, his heart, glowing with the rapture of holy love to Him who had loved His people and washed them from their sins in His own blood, and made them kings and priests unto God and His Father, he exclaims, “*To Him be glory.*”

Glory is a word taken from weight or gravity, and denotes real solid excellence or splendour. The glory of man is thus a phrase used to express the soul of man, for that is his supreme, his more excellent part. The glory of God thus often stands for the essence of the Godhead, for God’s glory can never be separated from Himself. God is His own glory, and His glory is Himself. All language labours with a sense of poverty when it essays to portray the divine excellence. Glory, when spoken of in connection with Christ, is either the glory of His intrinsic excellence in itself or the glory of

that excellence as displayed before the eyes of men. "*To Him be glory.*" Now this doxology of praise is here given to Christ—

(1) *Because it belongs to Him in virtue of His own intrinsic excellence.* He claims this glory as His high prerogative. This glory which He claims no one else can share. The doxology of His people's praise is His, for to Him belongs the glory of the Deity. "The Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." He was truly and properly divine. To Him belongs alone, the glory of His person. There is not one else in the whole universe of God in whom you will find these singular words of divine truth fulfilled: "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." To Him thus belongs all the glory of incarnate God, nay, all the glory of incarnate God belongs to Him alone. To Him alone belongs the glory of His offices as Mediator, as He is the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of all the earth; the prophet, priest, and king of His people. And to Him alone in all God's universe belongs the glory of His work. Pass round among men, and your words of praise may fitly suit not a few of your fellows. Inspect some of the mightiest of human achievements, and your laudations cannot be confined to only one, as if he alone deserved them. What were the ablest general that ever directed the destinies of war, if stripped of the battalions which he led to victory? What were the ablest engineer that ever levelled mountains or made a passage for the foot of man over the ravine or river, without the aid of the willing hands of united and laborious toil? When you speak of the Saviour, however, you speak of one who in

the work of human redemption and salvation was alone in the whole enterprise of doing and dying, of obedience and satisfaction from the beginning to the end. No one shared with Him in the work, and thus no one can share with Him in the glory. He trod the winepress alone, and of the people there were none with Him. Redemption was His work alone. It was His blood alone that was shed for the remission of sins. It was His death alone that is the salvation of His people. The words in this passage apply to Him, and can apply to no other of created or uncreated being: "*To Him that loved us, and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood ; to Him be glory.*"

(2) *This doxology of praise is here given to Christ because the ascription of glory is due to Him in virtue of its manifestation before the eyes of the beings He has made.*—Christ is entitled to the praise of all His people if only we look at the manifestation He has made of His glory. We speak not simply of the glory of His pre-existent state, His personal glory which He had with the Father before the world was, but chiefly of the glory which He has let down upon this world of sin and death, like the sun's own radiance, to illumine it with light and to vivify it with life. Think of the glory that preceded His coming in the flesh in all that mighty array of promise and prediction, of type and symbol, which was designed to herald it, just like the streaks of light that give a roseate colour to the eastern sky in the dawning of the morning, ere the glorious sun break forth in beauty upon a waking world. Just as the dawning light tells the coming glory of the rising sun, so did the prefigurations of the old economy during the times of patriarchs and prophets tell the coming glory of the Sun of righteousness. Then look at the glory of His birth. Though born in a stable and laid in a manger, heaven lent its stars

and its minstrelsy of angels to do honour to the scene. At His birth the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted aloud for joy. Then think of the glory that frequently burst through all the veil of His humiliation and lowliness, and proclaimed Him to be the Son of God. Even His very humiliation revealed His glory, just as night reveals the stars, and makes the face of the heavens to be a mirror studded with jewels. How did the glory of mercy and power shine forth from all His miracles ! how did the glory of divine love shine forth amidst all His sufferings ! and was there ever such a death since the world began, telling not only of inconceivable suffering, but of inexhaustible patience, forgiveness, and love ? And then think of the glory of His resurrection, when He burst the bands of death—of His ascension to that glory which He now possesses in the metropolis of the universe ; in the many crowns He wears upon His head ; in the sceptre He bears in His hand ; in the glorious salvation which He executes within the veil. Think of the glory that accrues, and shall ever accrue to Him, from the fact that His blood, and His blood alone, is the redemption of the sinner's soul ; that His blood alone can rescue it from sin, death, and hell ; that His blood alone can wash away all its sins, and prepare it and purify it for the glorious blessedness of heaven. And then think of the glory that for ever shall be His from the whole sacramental host of the redeemed, the great company which no man can number, as, standing before the throne, they trace their possession of everlasting salvation to His blood, in which they have been washed ; and well may the glory which the Saviour possesses lead them to give forth this glowing doxology of praise : “ *To Him be glory.*”

2. *In the matter of this doxology of praise which is here*

given to the Saviour, there is dominion.—“*To Him be glory and dominion.*” He who by His blood has made His people kings and priests unto God has here ascribed to Him “*dominion.*” The word signifies in the original strength and power or authority, and includes in it omnipotence of power and universality of rule. This dominion is ascribed to Christ as either divine or mediatorial: “*To Him be dominion.*”

(1) *This dominion here ascribed to Christ is Divine, for it possesses all the properties and characteristics that belong to Him as the infinite, eternal, and immutable God.* Christ's dominion as God is supreme. He has absolute sovereignty over all kings and all worlds. He doeth according to His will both among the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth. His dominion being the infinite, there is nothing that is withdrawn beyond the reach of His unfettered and absolute sway. And His dominion is eternal. He ever sat upon the throne in full possession of all the prerogatives and rights of universal and sovereign dominion. Go back, however far, into the dateless ages of the past, and you will find Him clothed, not only with all the glory of uncreated being, but of underived sovereignty; His brow bedecked with the crown that sparkles with the jewelled light of eternity, and His hand holding the sceptre of eternal sway. The crown has ever been on His head, and the sceptre ever in His hand. Then, His dominion is immutable. Other dominions are able to date their beginning, their day of glory, their decline and fall. The universal law of change, out of which they all arise, ere long brings the highest thrones and the mightiest sceptres to the dust. Their dominion expires before the breath of time. Christ's throne is the throne at whose base human thrones must crumble; but their decay and

dissolution make no change upon its undying and immutable strength. No; far and for ever removed beyond all the changes which enfeeble and prostrate all earthly dominions, based on the rock of the divine immutability, the torrent of time and convulsion sweeps past it, ever leaving it the same as it passes, for it is the throne of Him who is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

(2) *This dominion here ascribed to Christ is Mediatorial.* In this ascription of praise the dominion of Christ refers, not so much to His kingdom as essential God, as to that kingdom which He possesses as Mediator in virtue of His sufferings and death. This mediatorial kingdom is founded on His substitutionary sacrifice. It was matter of the eternal covenant of grace that, if He gave His soul unto death upon the cross, He should, as Mediator, be exalted to the throne. It was promised Him that, if He did the work of suffering and sacrifice, He should be mediatorial King over all the redeemed who had been purchased by His blood, and who, by the power of His grace, were to be rescued from sin and Satan and death, as well as over all beings and all worlds, for their eternal blessedness and glory. This is a dominion whose glory is ever increasing, as souls, by the power of divine grace, through the truth of the divine word, and by the energy and influences of the Divine Spirit, are converted to the Lord. Every case of conversion is only a gem set in the glory of Christ's mediatorial crown! and a jewel added to its brightness. Every soul, in its progressive sanctification, is only an addition to its brilliancy and lustre. The whole convocation of the redeemed around the throne will be a full-set diadem of completed beauty—the crown which Christ shall for ever wear in token of

His dominion over all the souls He has purchased with His blood.

But this dominion does not only extend to His people, though they are the willing subjects of His mediatorial sway, and shall be for ever the memorials of His might and the monuments of His mercy and love. For their sakes He rules over all the nations and kingdoms of the world. He is prince of all the kings of the earth. To His sceptre they must bow. They must be subservient to His sway. For the sake of His people He raiseth up and removeth kings. For their sakes He directs all the changes of earthly sovereignties. The whole events of time come and go at His bidding. And well does it become us, amidst all the din of a noisy world, amidst all the changes and revolutions of empires, amidst all the upheavings of states, and fall of thrones and dynasties, to rise up through all the mere machinery of second causes to the throne of Him who directs and regulates the whole of providential events in the might of His sovereign and universal dominion, by the immediate touch of His own invisible hand. Let it be remembered that His mediatorial empire, based on His own blood, exists for the salvation and guidance and glory of His blood-bought subjects, and under His presidency shall it continue to extend and increase, till it reach from sea to sea and from shore to shore; till the whole world of men shall be subjugated to His sceptre, and this ascription of praise be given forth by the multitudinous voices of the whole of earth's vast and varied populations; till God shall view from the heights of heaven's sanctuary a ransomed and regenerated and happy world, as thus it breaks forth into the melody of universal song: "*To Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings*

and priests unto God and His Father ; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

II. THE MANNER OF THIS DOXOLOGY OF PRAISE TO CHRIST.—This is to be found in the words, "*for ever and ever. Amen.*" These are the two things annexed to the matter of this doxology of praise. The faith of saint-hood here gives an ascription of praise to Christ, which it declares to be His for ever. It thus shows that the glory and dominion to which the passage refers is mediatorial. Then next it sets the seal to this eternal glory and dominion of Christ as Mediator by the emphatic "*Amen.*" "*To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*"

1. *It declares Christ's dominion and glory to be Eternal.*—"*For ever and ever.*" It is the affirmation of the glorious fact, so dear to the heart of all genuine faith, that Christ's glory and dominion shall endure for ever. The glory He possesses is eternal, and the dominion He exercises is everlasting, He never can be shorn of the splendour of His name and achievements ; He never can be deprived of His sceptre of universal sovereignty. There is no fear that another shall arise to dim the glory of His name or rob Him of the honour He has won. No fear that any other shall tread through such a path of humiliation, and suffering, and death, to such a throne of dominion, or hold in his hand a sceptre that has been acquired at the cost of such a sacrifice. How frequently has glory been gained in earth by men through the wide-spread suffering of their fellows ! The glory of Christ has been gained by Himself treading a path of suffering and sacrifice. How often have men reached thrones through shedding the blood of their fellows ! Christ reached His mediatorial throne through the shedding of

His own. Men frequently have vaulted to the seat of empire by leaving behind them a pathway of desolation that told only of the mourning, lamentation, and woe of those who had been smitten, and were bereaved and desolate. Christ came to His throne by a pathway of suffering and anguish, but they were all His own, while all behind Him and around Him only told of blessing to mankind. Never was glory so gained; never was dominion so secured. But the glory thus gained and the dominion thus secured can never be lost. From their very nature both are indestructible and eternal. They are, and they must be, "for ever and ever." They are matter of covenant-promise, and they are matter of mediatorial purchase. They are thus firm as the foundations of the divine throne, and immutable as the word of Him whose word abideth for evermore. Thus, while the glory of every name on earth shall vanish, Christ's name and glory and dominion are eternal. Yes; the proudest and noblest of earth's potentates shall fall before the breath of time, and perhaps be for ever forgotten in eternity. At best they shall have but little place there. The little fames of earth shall have died out there. But throughout eternity the glory of Christ shall be in every mouth, and His praise shall be on every tongue. The kingdoms of earth shall die and be forgotten. The mightiest monarchies that ever existed upon earth shall be lost sight of on the other side of time, but Christ's dominion points to the throne of eternity, whereon He shall sit, and receive from His people this unceasing doxology of praise: "*To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.*"

2. *There is annexed to the doxology an emphatic "Amen."*—This is the seal of faith's feeling to this glowing doxology of praise: "*Amen.*"

It is an act of solemn worship. It bows the knee before the throne of Him to whom it ascribes glory and dominion. It is an act of grateful dedication. He who says "*Amen*" to this doxology in the spirit of Him who uttered it, willingly devotes to the Saviour the homage of his heart. He lays himself, in all he is, in all his faculties and powers, upon the altar in self-consecration, in humble, earnest dedication to the Saviour's glory. The motto of his life is, "To me to live is Christ." He has given up himself in self-denying service to the Saviour's cause, and he is ready for any work, however arduous, for any gift, however great, for any sacrifice, however trying, if only he can add gem to gem, jewel to jewel in Christ's mediatorial crown. Christ's glory is the first thing with him on earth, the extension of His dominion the chief object of his life, and to see that glory advanced and that dominion extended and increased fills the heart of him who can truly join in this ascription of praise with rapturous rejoicing, as he pronounces, in token of his faith and gladness, this emphatic "*Amen*."

Nay, this "*Amen*" is an act of prayerful desire that Christ's glory and dominion should be for ever. It is not only an act of solemn worship; it is not only an act of solemn dedication; but it is faith's prayer at the divine throne. It says, Let it be so—let Christ's glory and dominion be for ever and ever. They who truly utter this emphatic "*Amen*" would have it, that the Saviour should even now appear gloriously among the nations of the earth with the crown of universal dominion upon His head and the sword of universal victory upon His thigh, that He should go forth conquering and to conquer. They would even now have the mighty reverberations of the seventh angel's trumpet

to sound over every isle and continent of earth, "The kingdoms of this world are become kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Let the whole earth be filled with His glory.

" Waft, waft, ye winds, His story,
 And you, ye waters, roll,
 Till, like a sea of glory,
 It spreads from pole to pole ;
 Till o'er our ransomed nature
 The Lamb for sinners slain,
 Redeemer, King, Creator,
 In bliss returns to reign."

Nor can it be denied that this emphatic "*Amen*" is prophetic of the issue which shall yet be reached on earth through the instrumentality of the divine word and the agency of the Divine Spirit. The time is coming when Christ shall have the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost ends of the earth for His possession. Not for ever shall darkness cover the earth, and gross darkness the people. Not for ever in so-called Christian lands shall Christ receive only the vain homage of an unbelieving profession of His holy name. Go forth by the light of this blessed word of prophetic revelation, and what a different aspect shall our sin-stricken and sorrowing world present! I see the light of the Sun of righteousness shining on every land. I behold all the nations of Europe, once the blinded devotees of Popish superstition or Mohammedan delusion, now bending before the throne of Christ the only Mediator, and giving to Him the homage of their adoring praise. I go to the far East, and I see the peoples of Asia trooping apace to the standard of salvation, and adoring Him who is the only King of kings and Lord of lords. I see the tribes of down-trodden Africa blessed with the glorious liberty wherewith Christ makes all His people free,

their voices of wailing exchanged for songs of thanksgiving and praise. I see the mighty peoples beyond the Atlantic, and in the continents and isles of the Pacific, swelling the music of the wondrous anthem that shall rise up as the voice of many waters and of mighty thunderings, the tribute of a world's praise, in this language of the doxology of our text, for its prophetic "*Amen*" shall yet be fulfilled to the full, when the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea, when no man shall need to say to his brother, know Him, for all shall know Him, from the least even to the greatest. Oh, how glorious shall be the voice, when from the whole of the inhabitants of this wide world shall rise up this doxology of praise: "*Unto Him that loved us, and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*"

IN CONCLUSION. *Let us say to you, O believer, what reason have you to rejoice in Christ's glory and dominion, for you shall share it!* It is the matter of Christ's promise to you, and the promise shall be realized to your eternal blessedness and joy. Nor need you doubt the security and certainty of its glorious realization. It is yours, because Christ Himself is yours, yours absolutely, yours eternally. Nay, He is yours, in a sense in which nothing else is yours, for ever and ever. You shall part with all else here below. You cannot call anything of time yours as you can call Christ yours. You shall be severed from all earthly objects, from all earthly friends, from all that the heart may most tenderly cherish. "But I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers

nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." No, Christ is mine, mine absolutely, mine now, mine for ever and ever. He is mine, and I shall share in His glory. He is mine, and I shall share in His dominion. He is mine, and I am His by the bond of a covenant that can never be broken. Thus with glowing heart may the believer go on through life, and at last close his life with this triumphant doxology of praise: "*Unto Him that loved us, and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*"

But if, as a believer, you have reason to rejoice in Christ's glory and dominion, because you shall share it, what should be the spirit which it becomes you to manifest, and the service which you ought to render, that Christ's glory may be advanced, and His kingdom and dominion increased and extended to the ends of the earth? Does it not become you by self-denial, by active exertion, by liberal gift, and by earnest prayer, to be instrumental in the advancement of the Saviour's glory? Does it not become you to dedicate your activities to the Saviour's service, and to reckon no self-denial too great, no work too difficult, no deed too lowly, if it only be the means of recommending Christ to the acceptance of sinners, to the faith of sinners' hearts for their salvation and life? Remember that the salvation of sinners is the glory of Christ, it is the extension of His mediatorial dominion, which is yet to embrace the world. Give then yourselves to Christ's cause, that sinners may be saved, and Christ glorified. Never forget that by your exertions and by your prayers you may swell the melody of this doxology

of praise, which comes glowing from the heart of every child of God, which is given by the Church on earth, which is given by the Church in heaven, which shall be given by the whole host of the redeemed as they stand before the throne as the anthem of an eternal praise: "*To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*"

But while Christ's glory and dominion are the joy of His people, they are the terror of His foes. In the view of this glory and dominion, let us say to the unbelieving, kiss the Son, lay down the weapons of your rebellion, become submissive to the Saviour's sway. Remember that you stand on the perilous juncture of two eternities, the eternity of the past and of the future, and ere long you shall have done with time for ever. Defer submission to Christ by faith, and your procrastination may be your eternal ruin. Up, for you are slumbering on the very verge of doom. Up from your slumber, fall upon your knees and pray the Lord to have mercy upon your soul. Up, or you may defer until the terrible summons of death reaches you, and you may be driven away in your wickedness to eternal woe. Defer not; accept the offered Saviour. Take hold of Him by faith, for He is freely offered you. Take Him. Trust Him as He is set before you in the gospel, and then shall you be able to join in this glowing doxology of our text: "*To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*"

Remember that if you submit not to His dominion, nevertheless He shall have glory out of you. You cannot bereave Him of His glory. He shall be glorified either by your salvation or condemnation. You shall either glorify His mercy or His justice. Glorify Him now by faith, by presenting yourself to Him as a living sacrifice through faith in Him. Glorify His justice,

by taking hold of His righteousness, and presenting it at God's throne for mercy, and glorify His mercy by seeking to obtain it in the appointed way, by faith in Him whose blood is the only propitiation for the sins of men. Remember that He has the power to pardon and the power to punish ; that He is able and willing to pardon the guiltiest of the guilty, for His blood cleanses from all sin ; that He has power to punish those that are stout-hearted and far from righteousness, for all power as Mediator is given to Him in heaven and on earth—nay, all judgment is committed to Him, because He is the Son of Man. See, then, that ye yield to Him the glory of humble faith, and become thereby through grace His loyal and obedient subjects, and then, in the possession of life and blessing through Him, you shall be able to join in this glowing doxology of praise : “ *Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father ; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*”

XVII.

*GRACE ESSENTIAL TO THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.*¹

“But by the grace of God I am what I am : and His grace which was bestowed on me was not in vain ; but I laboured more abundantly than they all : yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”—1 COR. xv. 10.

PAUL, the apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, was a man of rare attainments and of singular earnestness and decision. He threw his whole heart into the work assigned to him as the business of his life, and was to be deterred from its prosecution by no obstacle however formidable, and by no enemy however fierce or powerful. Before his conversion he was a relentless persecutor. He punished the saints in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme, and, being exceedingly mad against them, he persecuted them into strange cities. After that day of the marvellous manifestation of divine power and mercy, when on the way to Damascus there shone round about him a light from heaven, and the message of divine grace reached his soul ; when the persecutor was melted into the apostle, and received his commission to preach unto men the unsearchable riches of Christ ; when, under the pressure of a mighty cause, and with heart of determined resolve, he was consecrated, soul, body, and spirit, to the service of the glorified Redeemer, how

¹ Preached in connection with the services at the Jubilee of the Rev. Dr. Thomson, in Broughton Place Church, Edinburgh, April 3, 1887.

unwearied were his exertions, how indefatigable his labours, how single-eyed and soul-commanding was the one grand object ever before him! It defined the current of his energies. It directed every outgoing of his activities. It gave character to every footstep of his path, to every prayer of his spirit, to every labour of his life. He lived for the gospel. He laboured for the gospel. His whole heart's feelings were identified with the gospel. The weight of its responsibilities was the mainspring of his spiritual being. It kept in continuous action every faculty of his soul and every feeling of his heart. Hence, said he, "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel."

Under the mighty force of all the responsibilities which sprang out of his high commission, and with a heart keenly alive to the spiritual wretchedness of men, "This one thing I do" was the motto of his life. Whether he stood on Mount Moriah and beheld the fair city of Jerusalem, with which were linked the splendid associations of many centuries of special intercourse with heaven, where Deity incarnate had lived and laboured and suffered, where every foot of earth had a history, and every scene was only a perpetual memento of divine power and grace; whether he gazed on Athens, the eye of Greece, the mother of arts and eloquence, in all the beauty of her simple yet severe architecture, the noblest in the world, or beheld the islets of the Ægean sleeping in the sun, the image of loveliness and grace; whether he stood on the Capitoline of imperial Rome, the mistress of the nations, and saw her seven hills studded with the abodes of living men, he beheld only in all that wide expanse of human misery the presence of immortal men under the dark midnight of spiritual ignorance and guilt, and thus at

once, under the urgency of the commission he had received from heaven, and the stern necessity he beheld on earth, the preponderating importance of the gospel cause was the prevailing thought of his heart, and its prosecution the object of his life. He ever felt himself to be under the eye of the great Saviour from whom he had received his apostleship, and with a heart yearning for the souls of men in guilt and misery, could he either be slothful in spirit or unceasing in toil? No; he must labour, he must be instant in season and out of season. Bonds and imprisonment await him in every city. And yet he says, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto me, that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Cheered by no help of man, single-handed and alone, with only the strong hand of faith to support him, he is ever intent on work and prepared for toil, to bear his testimony wherever providence may direct his steps, to confront the malice of his erring countrymen, to lift up his voice for the cause of Christ even at the foot of Cæsar's throne, and for the sake of Christ and His gospel to meet unshrinkingly the solitude of the dungeon or the suffering of death. He will be subdued by no labour. He will be appalled by no trial. He will be intimidated by no enemy. He will be unwearied in labour because ever dependent on divine grace. He will fearlessly defy man, because simply relying upon God.

Manifold and successful were the apostle's labours, and how fitly they become him when they exhibit themselves as here before us in the garb of humility! It is this which gives a distinguishing lustre to his life of laborious toil. He does not turn to his work nor proclaim the surpassing soreness of his trials, that the man

may be commended, the apostle honoured, but that God may be glorified. Grace had made him a Christian. "By the grace of God I am what I am." Grace had made him the laborious and successful apostle. "And His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all." Let no man mistake, however, either the source of the apostle's energy or the secret of his success. The man, the apostle, is nothing. God is everything. "*Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*"

Now, here you will notice that we have in God's grace the special requirement of the Christian ministry alike for labour and success. Let us then, in the prosecution of our discourse, turn your attention to the statement of the apostle as it bears upon the work of the Christian ministry, and may the Lord grant us grace rightly to unfold and practically to apply it. "*Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*"

I. WE NOTICE, IN REGARD TO THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY, THAT GRACE PREPARES FOR THE WORK.

The work of the Christian ministry involves arduous duties and weighty responsibilities. Its object is the glory of God by the salvation of immortal souls, and hence it seeks to arouse sinners from their spiritual slumber and convert them from the error of their ways, to build up believers in the faith of the gospel, to cheer the downcast, to comfort the afflicted, to reclaim the wandering, and to cast the light of gospel promise over the bed of death and gladden it with the joy and glory of heaven. Now, for such a work there is need of the furniture both of grace and gift. In such a work the highest gifts have scope for their noblest exercise, and the graces of the Christian character the richest soil

for growth and increase. Contemplating its results, both in time and throughout eternity, it might well employ the powers even of angelic intellect, for it purposes the restoration of a ruined world to God, the blessedness of man by the enjoyment of the divine life and love, and the glory of God's throne by a harvest of souls gathered out of the desolation of sin and death.

As preparatory for such a work, the experience of divine grace is an essential requisite. It lodges in the soul the first element of all power, the very first principle on which all success in such a work depends. It gives Christ's servants sympathy with the cause to which they have been solemnly devoted. It inspires their hearts with earnestness. It consolidates their mental vigour. It wings every faculty with zeal. It makes them polished shafts in the quiver of the Lord, to go home with power to the consciences and hearts of men. Look to apostolic times, when Christianity went forth unaided by secular power to the evangelization of a world, and what was the equipment of ministerial agency? With no argument but divine truth, no look but love, no wealth but piety, no inheritance but faith, the messengers of Christ upraised the standard of the cross and unfurled the broad banner of salvation before the eyes of men. How was it that, under the divine blessing, Jewish prejudice and pagan superstition parted from the minds of men, and Christianity achieved her bloodless victories? In these few words, "We believe, and therefore speak," you have the secret, the explanation of ministerial success. It was faith that gave might and mastery to apostolic testimony. It was as a fire in the bosom, enkindling every energy, and rendering every ministerial proclamation of the gospel instinct with life. The sympathetic power of faith made every utterance vital and charged with the

soul-subduing energy of conviction. There was telegraphed through every word of the preacher the deep-seated, invincible faith of his own mind and heart. It glowed in his earnestness, it pointed his appeals, it gave motive power to ministerial energy, and, by the blessing of the Divine Spirit, it subdued men to God.

Now this law of ministerial preparation is the law still. Without it the pulpit would lack power, because it would lack spiritual force. That man only can speak as a messenger to souls in spiritual death, who has himself been awakened to life. How can the dead speak to the dull cold ear of spiritual death with the impressiveness of a heart that is all aglow with spiritual influence? I do not say that God may not bless, that God does not bless, the labours of an unbelieving messenger; that such an one may not, in spite of his unbelief, be the means of blessing; but oh, how inapt the instrumentality as you contrast it with *his* spirit who is charged with the energy which faith imparts and grace communicates! Grace makes the heart of the preacher alive with pity as he deals with unbelieving men. It qualifies him to guide the awakened spirit, to aid the soul in the birth-throes of conversion, to administer with skilful hand in the hour of temptation, to comfort with the consolations wherewith he himself has been comforted of God. It brings experience to bear on the varied forms of spiritual state, and sharpens every arrow of divine truth, and clothes every promise of divine blessing so as to reach the hearts of men with all the precision of spiritual power. It makes the minister truly a messenger of God to men, fitting him, by the very instincts of his spiritual sympathies and by the experiences of his own spiritual life, to arouse, to comfort, to reclaim, and save.

While grace is an essential prerequisite for the minister

of the gospel, it is not meant to be affirmed that in this alone you have all fitting qualification for the arduous and responsible work to which he is called. The grace of which he needs to be a partaker is the common privilege of all Christians. The possession of it alone is thus not simply sufficient to qualify for ministerial work. Gifts as well as grace are essential to wield the sword of the Spirit, to bring home truth to the human understanding, to stir the depths of conscience, to read the recesses of the human heart. Grace without gifts will not make an inapt instrumentality effective. Gifts without grace will leave the aptest instrumentality deficient in spiritual force. Gifts and grace together make Heaven's messenger mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, adequate to accomplish the highest spiritual achievements. A sanctified intellect wielding the weapons of Heaven's gospel armoury is God's chosen instrumentality ordained to subjugate human hearts, to conquer amidst all the fierce and absorbing conflict of human passions, to write heaven's spiritual history in a world of sin. If gifts enable to handle the sword of the Spirit, grace can alone enable to handle it with effect. How essential, then, is grace for the ministry of the gospel! *"Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."*

II. WE NOTICE, IN REGARD TO THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY, THAT GRACE COMFORTS UNDER THE WORK.—The work of the Christian ministry is difficult as well as arduous and responsible. It is no light office with which the Christian minister is invested, nor, if he be faithful in the discharge of its duties, need he expect to be spared the experience of difficulty and discouragement. He has, indeed, to employ a heaven-appointed instrument, but it is upon hearts that are naturally steeled against his message,

darkened by sin, and inhabited by the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, and who strives with all the fierceness of inveterate evil to hold possession of the human soul. To awaken consideration and inquiry, to arouse the energies of slumbering conscience, to fill it with the arrows of conviction, is a work involving difficulty as well as labour. And then, how discouraging in many a case to mark that truths however solemn, and appeals however tender, and warnings however earnest, and threatenings however alarming, seem to glide from off the sinner's soul like arrows from a coat of mail; that the heart seems to remain impenetrable to conviction, like the solid rock unsplintered, unaffected by every proof of the freeness, and richness, and suitability of divine mercy, and unscathed by every denunciation of coming wrath! To deal with hearts naturally shut against divine truth, and averse to its reception through prejudice and passion, or with mourning voice to say, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" tells alike of difficulty in labour, and discouragement to the soul.

Nor is the whole of the difficulty to be found only outside the circle of spiritual life. Within the sphere of Christian faith how difficult is it to adapt the varied parts of ministerial labour, so as to invigorate the feeble, to quicken the declining, to console the sorrowful, to fortify the tempted, to censure and restore the sinning, to build up with careful hand the body of Christ! Nay, how discouraging it may be to find that laborious toil may be little appreciated, that faithfulness to Christ may be misinterpreted, that the most prayerful efforts for the well-being of souls may be misrepresented, and the Master thus be dishonoured in the person of his servant! The best of men, it is to be remembered, are at best but men.

Rightly to divide among them the word of truth is a work of difficulty, and even by his own people the servant of Christ may be discouraged and perplexed.

And then it must not be forgotten that the Christian minister himself is a man of frailty and infirmity, only an earthen vessel into which has been put the treasure of divine truth. How often, after all the carefulness of laborious study, must he go to his work with a sense of shortcoming, and ever with a sense of insufficiency and weakness! Himself a sinning man, in whose heart corruption yet retains its place, exposed to trial, temptation, and suffering, he has his own spiritual difficulties to encounter, and special discouragements that are peculiar to himself. Grace, however, is his consolation as a man. Grace is his consolation as a minister of Christ. By grace not only is he personally sustained and solaced amidst all his struggles with temptation and corruption, but his very experience of trial, his very sense of shortcoming and consciousness of insufficiency, are made to reflect a brighter glory over the trophies of divine grace. And then, how comforting, amidst all his difficulties and discouragements, to reflect that success is not his, but God's, that he is but little able to deal with the arithmetic of piety, that not a few may have been awakened and converted, whose spiritual change is, as yet, to him unknown, that even now he may be treasuring up in many a soul the elements of divine truth, which God the Spirit may, ere long, handle with converting power, that even after all the messenger is not to be judged by his success, but by his faithfulness, that amidst all his labours and discouragements he may rest with unwavering confidence on the soul-cheering comforts of divine grace. Let him only be faithful, and he can never be without an abundant well-spring of spiritual consolation.

Let him only do the Master's work, and he can surely reckon upon the Master's joy. Give him only as his portion the grace of God, to meet all his personal needs and ministerial difficulties, and he can neither be uncheered in duty nor o'ermastered by trials. Grace is sufficient to comfort him under his work: "*Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*"

III. WE NOTICE, IN REGARD TO THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY, THAT GRACE BLESSES IN THE WORK.—The work of the Christian ministry is not only arduous and responsible, but all success in it is wholly attributable to the power and efficacy of divine grace. The same grace that qualifies the Christian minister for labour, and supports him under the pressure of difficulty and discouragement, can alone make his ministerial teaching a message of salvation to men. A dead soul can only start into life by the exercise of divine power. The energy that gave life can alone restore it. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

While divine grace can alone bless the work of the gospel ministry, yet it must be such work as God has promised to bless. God's word, revealing Christ as a Saviour in all the glory of His person and offices and work of atoning sacrifice in the room of guilty sinners, is to be the grand subject of the Christian minister's message to men, that, by faith in Him as He is set forth in the gospel, they may be saved from the wrath that is to come, and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. God's word of the truth of the gospel is the sword of the Spirit, and only as this instrument is used by the preacher can he expect the aid of the divine blessing. The gospel alone, the words of Christ alone, are spirit and life. Preach what men may, if they preach not

Christ in all the glory of His vicarious atoning sacrifice, whose blood cleanseth from all sin, there will be no lifting up of the spiritual tombstone, no resurrection from the grave of spiritual death. It is the gospel of Christ distilling as silently and gently as the dew beneath the stars, yet through divine grace wielding an energy far more powerful than the lightning, that alone can open the dull cold eye of spiritual slumber, and cause the dead, wrapped though he be in the grave-clothes of spiritual bondage and lying in the tomb of spiritual death, to assume the attitude and exhibit the energy of spiritual life. The gospel of Christ is God's ordinance. It alone is the message of life.

If something else than the gospel has given spiritual life to men, where is it to be found? What has been the hope of the world where the gospel has never shone? The God of heathenism dwindled into an idol, and their longings after immortality into a vision of the night. Did philosophy make the men of Athens wise unto salvation, or declare unto them the unknown God whom they ignorantly worshipped. The light of art and science which her sons possessed was only like the lamp in the sepulchral vault, which wastes its oil upon the dead and reveals the desolation of the tomb. It disclosed the dark spiritual midnight of the wisest in the walks of high philosophy. Till the light of the gospel was let down from heaven upon earth, there was no pardon for the guilty, no purity for the polluted, no life for the dead. Why preach the gospel, the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord? Look at that soul alive in Christ, and there is the answer. A man may descant upon every other subject, he may tread the path of every philosophy, he may seek the admiration of men by the ingenuity of his metaphysical speculations, he

may unveil the secret springs of human action, and, as with the keen knife of the anatomist, he may unbare the corruption of the dead ; but where is the living, moving, spiritual being, the soul converted to the Lord, the soul restored to life, to tell that he has not misspent time and misdirected labour ? Crowds may listen, multitudes may admire ; but dead souls remain inanimate. It is not by such prophesying to the dry bones in the valley of vision, that bone links itself to bone, and flesh covers them. It is not after such prophesying that the breath from the four winds breathes upon the slain, and they start up a great army of living men. God's gospel alone is the instrument of life.

What need is there, besides, of any other message than that which is made known by the gospel of the grace of God ? Is it because there is nothing to engage the intellect in Jesus Christ and Him crucified ? There is about the cross of Christ what may employ the exercise of the noblest faculties and the highest mental energy. The cross of Christ exceeds the comprehension of angelic intellect. It outstrips its loftiest divinings. Does eloquence require a subject wherewith to reach the heart ? Where is there a subject like the cross of Christ, with heights of glory and depths of feeling that arouse to admiration and awaken to love ? Do men wish to lead the affections by the hand which way they please, or touch to music of concord the sympathies of the soul ? Do they wish to exercise an influence over the moral nature and give an impulse to the spiritual being which shall last as long as that being's existence ? They will find no subject that will so engage the intellect, captivate the heart, and sublime into holiest feeling every affection of the soul, as the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Still let the gospel, the ordinance of God's appointment,

be the instrument which the gospel minister wields, yet in vain he wields it without the blessing of divine grace. The weapons of his warfare are only mighty through God. The dew of conversion only lies on the field of gospel labour in the day of God's power, when a willing people through His grace are offered to the Lord. No preacher, however earnest, no agency, however effective, no sermon, however eloquent, can either reach the conscience or master the prejudices and unbelief of the human heart, without the agency and power of the Divine Spirit. Paul may plant and Apollos water; God only can give the increase. The sword of the Spirit can only subdue the hearts of men as it is wielded by the Spirit's hand. Thanks be to God for the promise, however, that wherever in faith, in earnestness, and with prayer divine truth is preached, He will vouchsafe His effectual, soul-awakening, soul-converting, soul-strengthening blessing. This is the comfort of a minister's heart. It cheers him amidst all the labour and heat of the day, and in the evening of his toil, as he is about to leave the scene of duty for the scene of rest and reward, it makes him carry all his success to the foot of the divine throne as a tribute to the divine glory. His parting breath acknowledges that divine grace alone has made him a blessing to the souls of men. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name be all the praise." *"Not I, but the grace of God which was with me."*

IV. WE NOTICE, IN REGARD TO THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY, THAT GRACE REWARDS FOR THE WORK.—The work of the Christian minister, while arduous and responsible, has yet a sure and glorious reward. Faithful labour shall not be unrequited, The faithful servant shall not be unrecompensed. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness

of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

Think of the reward there is in the very joy accompanying success, that the gospel minister has been made by God the instrument of saving a soul from spiritual death. Think of the value of a soul, of what is involved in its rescue from ruin, in its deliverance from sin and hell, in its restoration to the image and favour of God, in its enjoyment of everlasting bliss. The very thought that his labours have led, by divine grace, to the conversion of a sinner is fitted to awaken in the heart of every right-hearted gospel minister what well rewards him for all his toil.

While God reserves to Himself all the glory of man's salvation ; while the song of praise shall ever ascend to that God that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb ; while the redeemed shall cast their crowns of gold at the Saviour's feet, and honour Him with the lowliest worship of adoring love, yet such is the condescension of divine grace, that, by the employment of human instrumentality in the accomplishment of its designs of mercy, it lays the foundation for eternal reward and blessing. In that day, when the Church, without spot or blemish, shall be presented before God in all the perfection of completed spiritual purity, the faithful minister will not be bereft of his ministerial joy. How will it gladden his heart to know that he has been the instrument in the hand of the Divine Spirit of bringing men to the enjoyment of glory, a glory which by grace he has been made to share ! With a spirit rich in the possession of bliss, will not emotions of unspeakable gladness thrill his bosom as he gazes there upon the people whom, through his labours, grace has rescued, and who are for ever to be partakers with him of heaven's glory ? "For what is our hope, or joy, or

crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of the Lord Jesus? For ye are our glory and joy."

While the faithful Christian minister will for ever have in the fruits of his ministry a peculiar source of joy, yet the recognition and approval of the Master is his special, his looked-for, his longed-for reward. The thought of this inspirits his soul, restores his flagging energies, and sustains him in the course of his laborious and anxious toil. Nor shall this reward be withheld. While wholly of grace and not for labour, yet in proportion to his faithfulness, his zeal, his devotedness, shall he receive a blissful recognition at the hand of his Lord. Singling out His servant; setting forth in full view of an assembled universe all his works of faith and labours of love and patience of hope; concealing no part of his arduous toil, no word of faithful admonition he ever gave, no part of self-denial he ever exercised, no prayer he ever uttered, no wrestling supplication from his lips for sinners' souls that ever ascended to the throne on high, He shall testify to the faithfulness of his service, appoint him his place in the mansions of eternal rest, and welcome him to his home. "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." What a gracious compensation for all his toils, and how gladdening to receive it from the Lord's own lips! The reward of success here may indeed be cheering, but what is it to the reward yonder, the gracious reward of the loving Master, who delights to recompense! Oh, the gladness of that day of the servant's honour and of the Saviour's glory! It may well by anticipation sustain the soul in duty, and lead it to rise superior to discouragement and trial, for the riches of divine grace even now assure the true-hearted minister of Jesus Christ of an eternal and glorious reward. That reward will only lead him, with glowing spirit, to

exclaim, "*Not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*"

IN CONCLUSION. While grace prepares for the work of the Christian ministry, comforts under the work, blesses in the work, and rewards for the work, it is only grace that can make the word of the truth of the gospel to be effective and saving wherever the privilege of gospel preaching is enjoyed. How, then, should prayer, earnest and persevering prayer, follow up the work of preaching, that the work of God may have free course and be glorified! Though we listen to the glad tidings of gospel grace, though we have set before us the glory of Christ's sufficiency to save, the perfection of His atoning sacrifice in the room of guilty sinners, and be plied with the most pressing invitations to accept Him for our present and eternal well-being, yet all will be in vain unless divine grace bring home truth to the conscience, and subdue the heart to the obedience of faith. What need, then, of prayer to follow every proclamation of the gospel, that sinners may be converted and the Saviour glorified! All conversion and edification depend on grace bringing home truth to the conscience and heart. Let, then, grace be sought for salvation and life.

But while it becomes a Christian people to pray earnestly that the grace of God may make all the work of the gospel minister to be the means of the conversion of sinners and of edification to all who believe, they ought especially to pray for those who are appointed to declare to them the gospel message, and to watch for their souls as those who must give an account. Thus does Paul beseech the believing Thessalonians—"Brethren, pray for us." He charges the believing Ephesians to pray for him, "that utterance may be given him, that he may open his

mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel." The minister's preaching and the people's prayers should ever be conjoined, and so should prayer ever be offered for the minister himself. He should be borne by the people to the throne of grace, for unless as God's messenger he be made the subject of prayer, what he proclaims is not likely to become matter of spiritual profiting. Whenever a people cease to pray for their minister, they cease to profit by his preaching, and their souls are sure to be afflicted with spiritual decline. Prayer for Christ's servant must be made unceasingly by the Christian people, that the message of the gospel delivered by him may be found to be a means of blessing to their souls. For the truth of the text is equally applicable to both—" *Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*"

XVIII.

*PLENTEOUS REDEMPTION.*¹

“Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption.”—Ps. cxxx. 7.

“ With the Lord is plenteous redemption.”

Redemption is rescue from slavery, either by price or by power. In both senses do we find the word used in Scripture. It is written in Lev. xxv. 47: “And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger’s family: after that he is sold he may be redeemed; one of his brethren may redeem him.” Here we have redemption by price. His brother may redeem the man who has been sold into bondage by paying the price of his redemption, and thus restoring him to freedom. Then again it is written in Deut. vii. 8: “But because God loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers, hath He brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondsmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.” Here we have redemption by power. God by His mighty hand

¹ Preached at the opening of the *in hunc effectum* meeting of Synod, held in Queen Street Hall, Edinburgh, July 22, 1879.

brought forth Israel from the bondage of Egypt, and set him at liberty. By the payment of twenty millions of pounds sterling to the West India planters, this country, in 1834, purchased the freedom of all her colonial slaves. That was their freedom secured by price. Not long ago, in the United States of America, God smote slavery to the dust by the edge of the sword, and gave every slave his liberty. That was freedom secured by power. Redemption is either by price or by power.

In both senses is the word used in Scripture, to express the deliverance of sinners from sin, death, and hell, by the purchase of Christ's blood, and by the power of His grace. Thus it is written, 1 Pet. i. 18: "For ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Here we have Christ's redemption of His people by purchase, the price being the blood of His atoning sacrifice. Then, again, it is written in the Epistle of Paul to Titus ii. 14: "Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Here we have the effects of Christ's purchase, the redemption of His people from the power and pollution of sin. His people are redeemed by the purchase of Christ's blood, and by the power of His grace. The one redemption is Christ's work for them, the price He paid for them. The other redemption is Christ's work in them, the effect of His power in them. The one redemption He effected by His death. The other he effects by His Spirit, through the application of the redemption which His death has purchased. They are redeemed by price, and they are redeemed by power.

Now in redemption by Christ both these senses of the word are included, and hence it becomes comprehensive of the whole work and blessings of salvation. Thus when it is said in our text, that "with the Lord there is plenteous redemption," it intimates that, alike in regard to the purchase of redemption and the power by which it is applied, there is plenteous redemption with God, redemption in all the plenteousness of saving blessings. It proclaims its unlimited sufficiency, its universal adaptation, its superabounding fulness. "*With the Lord there is plenteous redemption.*" Let us then, in the prosecution of our discourse, lay before you some considerations that illustrate and establish the precious truth of our text :

I. "WITH THE LORD THERE IS PLENTEOUS REDEMPTION." THIS WILL APPEAR MANIFEST IF WE LOOK TO GOD'S PURPOSE OF REDEMPTION.

All salvation is traceable to God's gracious purpose to redeem. But for this purpose mercy would never have shed its light over a world of sin and misery. This purpose of divine love is the spring whence all saving blessings flow; the fountainhead of that river the streams whereof make glad the city of our God. Contemplating a world lying in sin and misery, God purposed redemption, and to this purpose must be ascribed at once the provision of divine mercy, and the communication of all saving blessings. This purpose respected not only the exercise of mercy, but all that could render it just in God to dispense it to the guilty. It contemplated all the difficulties in the way, the state and character of those for whom redemption was designed, and thus the necessity of mediation. This purpose is the grand central purpose of God, around which all His other purposes respecting our fallen race

revolve. The purpose to redeem is emphatically the purpose which, according to the good pleasure of His will, He purposed in Himself.

Now, looking at this purpose of God, we say it reveals that with the Lord is plenteous redemption. We know that it is not unusual to look at this purpose as if it narrowed the exercise of divine mercy and bounded the plenteousness of its blessings. We know that there are some who stumble at the divine purpose, and make it practically a ground for disbelief. Nor with the word of God before us can we deny that divine purpose has to do alike with redemption itself and with the destination of its blessings. It were to dim the glory of the divine sovereignty if we should deny to the great God that fixity of plan which clearly defines ends as well as means, and destines blessings as well as designs persons, in the one comprehensive purpose of His will. The word of God distinctly declares God's gracious choice of guilty men to everlasting life. Nor can it be otherwise, if omniscience be an attribute, and sovereignty be the prerogative of the Deity.

Let it not be forgotten, however, that this purpose of God to redeem is never to be viewed by us irrespectively of the means whereby salvation and all its blessings are enjoyed. Let God's sovereign purpose, in regard to the destination of the blessings of redemption, be stated as plainly as it may, let it be set forth as fully as it may. The truth of it we are not here to impugn, but to proclaim to the honour of the divine name. Yet it is to be remembered that God does not save men by bare purpose. They who are saved are not saved by mere absolute decree, that has no bearing on human action and responsibility in regard to the matter of salvation. While it is true that God, in the exercise of gracious

sovereignty, has purposed to save those whom He hath chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world, it is just as true that He has purposed to save, and has proclaimed it to be His purpose to save, all sinners who come unto Christ by faith. The one purpose in no way clashes with the other. They are only the two aspects of the one grand purpose. The one aspect is revealed to teach us the divine sovereignty; the other aspect to tell the sinner's duty. In preaching the gospel of the grace of God to men, we know no boundary to God's purpose of salvation but unbelief, no barrier but the depravity of the human heart. God purposes to save no sinner who does not believe in Christ. He purposes to save every sinner who accepts Christ by faith. Can any purpose be broader, wider, more comprehensive than this? There is not a sinner, however guilty, however depraved, however hell-deserving, whom God does not purpose to save, if only he will take Christ as his Saviour by faith. You tell me that God has elected men to everlasting life! I know it. I believe it. I rejoice in it. It glorifies the great God, and displays the sovereignty of divine grace. But do not set it forth as if it limited the sufficiency of a plenteous redemption, or stood in my way in coming to Christ for my present and eternal salvation. It is enough for me, it is enough to tell me, the super-abounding fulness of the mercy and loving-kindness of the Most High; that it is God's immutable and gracious purpose to save me, and every sinner who will accept Christ by faith; that I am invited and encouraged by God to believe in Christ; that I am commanded by God to believe in Christ; that I am promised by God the aid of the Spirit of all grace, if I will only seek it, to enable me to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved. How clearly does this purpose of God to save illustrate

and establish the truth of the text, "*That with the Lord there is plenteous redemption.*"

II. "WITH THE LORD THERE IS PLENTEOUS REDEMPTION." THIS WILL BE STILL FURTHER APPARENT IF WE LOOK TO GOD'S PROVISION FOR REDEMPTION.

God's purpose to redeem, and His provision for redemption, are inseparable. The purpose which He purposed in Himself was the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, for it respected not only the exercise of mercy, but all that could render it consistent with God's law and justice, to dispense it to the guilty. While God is infinitely gracious, while He purposes to exercise His grace towards sinners, yet He must do it in a way that shall neither prejudice the claims of justice nor tarnish the glory of His truth and holiness. Hence the purpose to redeem and the provision for redemption can never be dissevered. Look, then, at the provision made by God for redemption, and you will read the truth of our text in all the glory of divine justice and love. "*With the Lord there is plenteous redemption.*"

God's own Son is God's provision for the redemption of sinners. Fully qualified for the work, the Lord Jesus Christ most willingly undertook it. God's purpose, which set Him up in the everlasting covenant of grace as our substitute and surety, gave Him a right to execute it. Divinely appointed as God-Man Mediator and our kinsman Redeemer, He has successfully accomplished it, and now He is set forth by God to be a propitiation through faith in His blood.

See, then, what the case of sinners demanded, how Christ as Mediator was fitted for the work of redemption, how it has been gloriously completed, and you will thereby learn how Christ's character and work illustrate

and establish the truth that "*with the Lord there is plenteous redemption.*"

What, then, did the case of sinners demand? Sin, as transgression of the divine law, involves the sinner in guilt, brings him into a state of condemnation, and binds him over to punishment. As it severs the sinner from God, so it alienates him from the divine favour. It thus causes the loss of his spiritual life, and depraves his whole nature. Guilty and depraved, he is bound over to the wrath of God and the curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all its miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal.

Such is the sinner's case. What, then, does it demand? That the guilt through which the sinner has passed upon him a sentence of condemnation, and is exposed to the fearful infliction of divine wrath, be for ever expiated, that a ground of righteousness in order to his pardon and acceptance with God be provided, by obedience and satisfaction to divine law and justice, and that God, in His presence, and favour, and fellowship, be restored to the sinner's soul. Human guilt requires expiation; the pardon and acceptance of sinners must proceed upon a ground of righteousness, and sinners' hearts need the indwelling presence of God and His sanctifying grace.

Now, to bear the awful infliction of divine wrath, that human guilt may be expiated, to bring in a righteousness on the ground of which sinners may be pardoned and accepted, to open up the way whereby God may make the sinner's heart the place of His gracious presence, and give to the sinner the experience of loving fellowship, tell that he who would accomplish the work of human redemption must possess attributes and excellences, perfections and qualities, that are markedly diverse and seemingly incompatible. If sin require

expiation, then one in human nature must suffer. If guilt is to be expiated, then one possessing the nature of God must be the sufferer, for the attributes of God must give value to the sacrifice. Nay, if obedience to the divine law, and death, the endurance of its penalty, be required, that a righteousness for sinners be provided, then no created being can ever undertake the work, for the law of God demands, as personally due by every created being, all the obedience he is able to render, and no created being has a life of his own to give. All he is, and has, and can do belong wholly to God, and are only to be disposed of according to God's will. Nay, if God is once more to make the sinner's soul the place of His gracious presence and abiding, it must be through the blood of Him who being man can die, and being God can effect redemption, by a sacrifice of infinite worth.

Now, while such diverse and seemingly incompatible attributes and qualities are to be found in no created being, they gloriously meet in the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Being God over all, blessed for ever, He possesses all the glory and perfections of the Deity. Being in the form of God, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God. As man He was possessed of true humanity, for in all things He was made like unto us, yet without sin. In His person as God - Man Mediator there is such a conjunction of perfections and qualities as fully to equip Him for the work of redemption. Appointed by God to the work, He freely undertakes it, and fails not in its accomplishment. Expiation for sin is made, propitiation has been secured, a glorious, complete, and perfect righteousness for sinners provided, and the believing sinner rejoices in the favour and fellowship of God.

Observe how gloriously His work of redemption has been accomplished. The Saviour, in taking upon Him the nature of sinners, has laid upon Him, and freely takes upon Him as their substitute and surety, the burden of their guilt. Justice requires a ransom, and He presents Himself to justice. The law demands that obedience be given and its penalty be borne in the nature of the offender, and the Lord of glory is made manifest in flesh, a Babe in Bethlehem, and becomes a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Nay, in order to redemption there must be a full infliction of the penalty; and earth beheld its Lord, who had called it into being and peopled it with life, nailed to the cross, and expiring in agony, there bearing on that cross the punishment of sin, the desertion of God, the infliction of His wrath. The sun that hid His face in darkness, the rocks that rent, the graves that opened, presented no greater wonder in the physical world than did the death on Calvary, in its suffering and love, to the whole moral universe that gazed upon the scene. By that death in the room of the guilty, God's justice is satisfied and His law magnified, God is propitiated, and mankind sinners redeemed. By the obedience He rendered, and by the blood of the sacrifice He offered, Christ has become an accomplished Saviour. He has done all and suffered all that God's righteousness required Him to require for the redemption of guilty men. As the Captain of salvation, Christ has been made perfect, an accomplished Saviour through suffering. When upon the cross He said, "It is finished," the whole work of redemption, His work for us, was accomplished. Look, then, to Christ, and you find in Him and in His work all that the sinner needs for salvation. Turn your eye to Him, and you will learn that "with the Lord there is

plenteous redemption." The only limit to its sufficiency is the limit of Christ's merit, and that is boundless. It is certified to us, in all its perfection and exhaustless fulness, by the acceptance of His sacrifice. There is no sinner so guilty, that Christ's blood cannot pardon ; there is no sinner so polluted, that Christ's blood cannot purify ; there is no sinner so diseased with sin, that Christ's blood cannot cure ; there is no sinner so sunk in the depths of depravity, that Christ's blood cannot reach and restore. And there is not a sinner who can say that Christ's redemption is not for him, that he must be lost, for there is no redemption for him. No, redemption in its unlimited sufficiency, in all its plenteousness, is set forth before him, for "*with the Lord there is plenteous redemption.*"

And then be it remembered that, while Christ, because of His work of redemption, is an accomplished Saviour, fully qualified, He is also divinely appointed to save all who will come unto Him. Here there is no limitation, either in the character, condition, class, or circumstances of men. As God hath purposed to save all who will come unto Christ by faith, so Christ is appointed to save all who will come unto Him. No sinner that comes to Christ can be lost, nor can any one say that he is barred from Christ and the blessings of His salvation. As Christ is not only qualified to save, but as He is appointed by God to save all who will believe on Him, so, were a whole world of sinners to come to Him, the whole world of sinners would be saved. Here, then, is a Saviour fully accomplished. Here is a Saviour all-sufficient. Every sinner may have Him for the taking. He is qualified and appointed to save every sinner that will take Him by faith. Does not all this fully establish and proclaim the truth that "*with the Lord there is plenteous redemption*" ?

III. "WITH THE LORD THERE IS PLENTEOUS REDEMPTION." AND THIS WILL APPEAR, IF WE LOOK TO THE GOSPEL OFFERS AND PROMISES OF REDEMPTION.

All God's offers and promises of salvation are based upon His purpose and provision for redemption. Nay, these only explain what His purpose is and what His provision means. Would God proclaim the offer of mercy through the redemption of Christ to all, and promise mercy to every one who will accept Christ by faith, if Christ as an accomplished Saviour were not suitable for all, sufficient for all, free to all, and if it were not God's purpose to save all who will take Him as their Saviour by faith, and receive through Him the blessings of the redemption which He has purchased? The offers and promises of God in the gospel are only convincing proof that "*with the Lord is plenteous redemption.*"

On this great matter, so deeply affecting the well-being of men, both for time and eternity, God is especially anxious that He be fully and clearly understood. With this view He has scattered over the pages of Scripture, as stars are scattered over the face of the firmament above us, the light of proclamation that "*with the Lord there is plenteous redemption,*" and of promise that whosoever comes unto Christ for salvation shall by no means be cast out. Nay, take the offers and promises of the gospel, and you will find that God has everywhere strewn the sinner's path with arguments for faith in Christ; while, on the other hand, he will search the whole universe of God for ever in vain, for any rational ground for his unbelief.

Look, then, at the gospel offers and promises of God. Does not God proclaim Himself to be "the Lord God, merciful and gracious"? Does He not keep mercy for thousands, the God forgiving iniquity, transgression, and

sin? Is not this the voice of His gracious entreaty to sinners, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Does not God plead with sinners, saying, "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool"? Is not this God's gracious invitation: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come, buy and eat; yea, buy wine and milk without money and without price"? Is it not the proclamation and the promise of the loving Saviour, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"? Is it not written in the Word of God, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely"? These gospel offers and gracious invitations and promises are given to all, without limitation and without exception. To the very men of whom it could be said, "Him, being delivered by the predeterminate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and with wicked hands have crucified and slain," was this word of divine mercy addressed: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children."

Then look at God's receiving love as set forth in the Saviour's parable of the Prodigal Son. Having come to himself, the prodigal returns to his father. The father utters no upbraidings. He uses no terms of reproach. He anticipates the confessions of the penitent. He

exceeds all his hopes. "While he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion on him, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

How clearly do all the proclamations and promises of the gospel, as well as this beautiful parable, which reveals God's readiness to receive returning sinners, declare that "*with the Lord there is plenteous redemption*"! Moreover, it is matter even of the sinner's experience that God does not leave him unchecked on his downward path, that he does not go to ruin unwarned, that he must trample on conscience and conviction ere he reach the portals of eternal death. If, then, you look to these checks and warnings, which are but the entreaties of divine compassion, as well as at all the gospel offers and promises of divine mercy made to sinners through the blood of Christ's atoning sacrifice, have you not the most convincing illustration and confirmation of the truth, that "*with the Lord there is plenteous redemption*"?

IV. "WITH THE LORD THERE IS PLENTEOUS REDEMPTION;" AND THIS WILL APPEAR IF WE LOOK TO THE APPLICATION AND ISSUES OF REDEMPTION.

The truth of the affirmation made in our text has been put to the test. It has stood the trial. It is

confirmed by experience. Thousands of poor sinners, trembling under conviction of sin, have cast their souls by faith on Christ, and found that "*with the Lord there is plenteous redemption.*" The greatness of their guilt was no barrier in the way of blessing. Manasseh, who made the streets of Jerusalem run red with innocent blood, entreated the Lord for mercy, and the Lord was entreated of him. The woman who was a sinner repented, believed, and was forgiven. Saul of Tarsus was a persecutor, a blasphemer, and injurious, yet for Christ's sake he obtained mercy. The Corinthians were fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners. But they were washed, they were sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. You will not see in the whole Bible a case where a sinner came to the Lord and found that there was no redemption, no salvation, for him. There never was and there never will be such a case on earth. All who come to Christ are welcome. All who come to Christ are saved. No one is excluded from His presence and salvation. All are invited, encouraged, commanded by God to come to Him, all who seek are promised the aid of the Divine Spirit to enable them to come to Him, and all who have come have ever found that "*with the Lord there is plenteous redemption.*"

The greatest sinner who has sought mercy and through Christ has been forgiven is a testimony to the truth of our text, but so also is the most eminent saint. Plenteous redemption made him a forgiven sinner. Plenteous redemption through the grace of the Holy Spirit has made him an eminent believer. It has pardoned all his guilt. It is purifying his soul. It has implanted therein spiritual life. It sustains its

strength. It explains its increase. Ask the believer how he wars with sin and wrestles with corruption, how he conquers in temptation and is sustained in trial, how he has been borne over difficulty and quickened in decline, how he expects to be comforted in affliction and cheered amidst all the darkness of the valley of the shadow of death, what is his assurance of the glory of his everlasting home, and the answer will only declare the truth that "*with the Lord there is plenteous redemption.*"

And then, by the light of prophetic revelation, go forward into the future until time has melted into eternity, and gaze upon the vision of the Church triumphant. "These are they who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Look at these ransomed of the Lord that compose the glorified Church on high. Can you number the dewdrops of the morning which nature has shaken from off the locks, the raven-down of darkness? Can you number the stars of heaven, those golden lamps which God has lighted to cheer the dull cold eye of night, and ray down upon men a perpetual reminiscence of the Creator? Can you number the sand on the sea-shore, or set down in the calculations of human arithmetic the drops that compose the ocean? As little can you number the innumerable multitudes that shall dwell for ever with the Lord. Think not that the Saviour shall have few as the trophies of His redeeming work, that heaven throughout eternity shall not display God's plenteous redemption in a glorious monument to His rich and free and sovereign grace. As the great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stand before the throne and before the Lamb,

clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cry with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb," they shall be in their innumerable assembly, their complete purity and perfect bliss, an eternal and glorious testimony to the truth that "*with the Lord there is plenteous redemption.*"

IN CONCLUSION. Fathers and Brethren, let us give thanks to God that we have such a redemption to preach, that as God's servants we are commissioned to proclaim in our message of the gospel that "*with the Lord is plenteous redemption.*" The truth of our text is of the essence of the gospel, and has ever been held forth in the ministration of the Church to which we belong. As sinners we need redemption. Through Christ's work of obedience and atoning sacrifice, "*with the Lord there is plenteous redemption.*" Nay, as the misery from which believers are rescued by it would have lasted for ever, it is declared that Christ by His death has obtained eternal redemption for us. This plenteous, this eternal redemption it is our duty, our privilege, our joy to preach, for the glory of God, for the honour of Christ, to believers for their comfort, edification, and growth in grace, and to sinners of every class and condition of life for their present and eternal salvation.

XIX.

THE CHURCH'S PEACE.¹

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.”—PSALM cxxii. 6.

JERUSALEM was the Jewish capital of Palestine. As a city it possesses more of interesting remembrances than any other on earth. Its physical features are peculiar and impressive. Severed by deep ravines from the summit of a broad mountain ridge, it stands on an elevated plateau, with the hills around it, at once its beauty and its defence. It is from this peculiarity of its situation that the Psalmist draws one of his finest figures to set forth the safety and security of the Church of the living God: “As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even for ever.”

While the physical features of Jerusalem are striking, it is especially remarkable in historical interest. There is Mount Moriah, where now stands the Mosque of Omar, the mount on which Abraham raised an altar to sacrifice his son Isaac, and where, many a century after, Solomon erected his temple for the worship of the God of Israel. What a history does that mount furnish in the development alike of providence and grace! Thrones have crumbled beside it. The nations of the world have warred around it. God has dwelt on it in the visible

¹ Preached at the opening of the Synod, and in connection with the formal opening of the New College Buildings, Castle Terrace, Edinburgh, May 3, 1880.

symbol of His glory, and there incarnate Deity was revealed. Near to it is the Garden of Gethsemane, where frequently during our Lord's life on earth was the place of His retirement for prayer, and which will ever be remembered as the scene of His soul-desertion and agony. Not far distant is Mount Calvary, the hallowed spot of His crucifixion and death. There also is Mount Olivet, where the Saviour stood as He beheld the sinning city, and wept over it tears of warm yet sorrowful affection as He foretold its destruction, and from whose summit, having blessed His disciples, He departed into heaven.

Jerusalem as a city has associations of world-wide interest. Its every foot of earth has a history. Wherever you cast your eye, there is ever before you some object pregnant with the memories of the past; memories that are inseparably connected with the well-being of mankind.

Here in our text the Psalmist primarily refers to the metropolis of the Jewish people. It was the chosen seat of government, because there were the temple and the worship of the God of Israel. The psalm from which our text is taken was a pilgrim song, composed with reference to one of the three yearly festivals, when the people from all the land appeared in the holy city. The psalm expresses the gladness of the Psalmist's heart as he listened to the invitation to go up with his friends and companions to the house of the Lord. It then tells the impression produced upon his mind as he reached Jerusalem, the city of the great King; as he beheld Mount Zion, beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth; as he marked well her bulwarks, and considered her palaces. Inspired by the thoughts which a sight of the city awakened, by all the memories of her past history, so full of touching and tender associations, by

all that she was to his soul as the dwelling-place of God, whence He had given forth to His chosen Israel so many revelations of His mercy and glory, the Psalmist's heart goes forth in this earnest invitation to those who are around him, that with himself they may address the divine throne for her prosperity and peace: "*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.*"

While these most probably were the circumstances in which this psalm was composed, it is mainly to Jerusalem in a spiritual light that it directs our attention. As Jerusalem was highly favoured of God, the dwelling-place of the Most High, the tabernacle of His glory, the depository of His testimony, the scene of religious ordinances, the special place of sacrifice and service, so has Jerusalem been employed to designate the Church of Christ, the spiritual Jerusalem, which really embodies all that the ancient Jerusalem was intended figuratively to represent. Thus does the writer of the Hebrews speak of the Church of Christ as the "city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," and so also is it represented by the faithful and true witness to John, in apocalyptic vision, as "The city of my God, the new Jerusalem." Thus taken in its spiritual sense, Jerusalem in our text brings before us the Church of Christ, not the Church in heaven, the Church triumphant; for her no prayer requires to be made; but the Church on earth, that portion of the Church which is militant, as yet upon the scene of work and warfare. It is for Christ's Church on earth that we are invited by the Psalmist to address the throne of grace in earnest supplication, when he says, in the words of our text, "*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.*"

In looking, then, at these words, we shall in the prosecution of our discourse notice—

I. THE BLESSING FOR WHICH WE ARE TO PRAY. "*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.*" And here we remark—

1. *This blessing of peace implies external comfort.* This is something not to be undervalued. It is not to be reached, however, either by the world ceasing its hostility to the Church, or by the Church ceasing to be aggressive upon the world. It is to be remembered, if the Church of Christ is faithful to her principles, that she never can be at peace with the world. Her spirit, her faith, her life, her whole course, are in direct antagonism to the character and conduct of mere worldly men. To receive their praise might well lead her to suspect her faithfulness to the Master. To be opposed, maligned, and persecuted by them is often especial testimony of loyalty to her Lord and King. And then God has given to Christ the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. Crowned with glory and honour, the Mediator sits upon His throne, expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. It is the work committed to the Church to seek, by the preaching of the divine word and by the power of the Divine Spirit, to realize the promise made to her glorious Head, to subjugate the nations of the world to His sway. Never thus can the Church cease to be aggressive in this work, until the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

While thus the Church of Christ, if faithful to the Saviour, need not expect to be freed from the opposition, hatred, and persecution of mere worldly men; while she can never cease, by aggressive gospel warfare, to seek that the nations may be delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, yet there is a measure of external peace for which the Lord's people ought to pray; a peace not based on compromise,

not secured by the abatement of the Church's claims or by the desertion of her principles, not enjoyed by silencing the voice of her testimony or ceasing her warfare for the advancement of the Saviour's kingdom, but a peace effected for her by the guiding hand and governing power of her all-sufficient Lord. Such peace, not gained at the expense of her faith, but in spite of all her enemies, is an important blessing. For such peace the Lord's people may well pray.

We can the more value the external comfort which, by the good hand of the Lord upon us, this our beloved land possesses, because, when we turn our eye to the pages of the Church's history, we frequently light upon the record of far different experiences. Earth has been made to drink the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. There have been in our own land times of darkness and blood, when the minister's home was the mountain and wood; when the faithful remnant of God's chosen people had to meet together for His service with the outposted sentinel to watch, lest any bloodthirsty moss-trooper should make the meeting-place a scene of carnage. The hills and dales of our native land, where rest the ashes of our martyred forefathers, the stern assertors of our civil rights and the bold defenders of our religious liberties, are consecrated to us by their valiant deeds for Christ's crown and covenant, while the memories they recall will live in everlasting remembrance. It would betoken the approach of dire calamity if our people should ever forget what this land has suffered from the bloodthirstiness of Popery and the rage of rough-shod Prelacy, and what we owe to the struggles and sufferings of God's faithful saints. They lived in times when it required Christian courage to profess the gospel and true Christian faith to defend it. Difficulties, however, did

not deter them, nor danger subdue their spirit of undaunted fortitude. They sacrificed their lives rather than sacrifice their principles. They were faithful unto the death.

It becomes us to give thanks unto the Lord that we live in happier times. We have reason for gratitude because of the external comfort which the Church in this land enjoys. It has been acquired at no small expense, by resistance unto blood, striving against sin. It is the fruit, under God, of the Church's faithful attachment to Christ and His gospel. While we enjoy and feel the value of the blessing, we may well pray for its continuance. The progress of the cause of Christ is aided by it. It is not while the Church is gathering up her strength to contend with persecution that she is best prepared to scatter the good seed of the Word. It is not when she exchanges the blissful occupations of peaceful labour for the stern work of conflict that she can best promote the cause of the gospel among men. Persecution may brighten the glory of individual Christian character, but it breaks down the hedges that surround the vineyard of the Lord. It may tell a time of purging and purifying, of trying and testing the faith of discipleship, but it is not a time of widespread progress and success. Too frequently is the Church, then, beheld prostrate and bleeding under the strokes alike of her malicious foes and of her pretended friends. It is when she can peacefully sow the good seed of the word, and watch with hope and prayer the genial influences of the dew and sunshine of the Divine Spirit, that she enjoys most of the sense of comfort and the certainty of success. It is written in the Acts of the Apostles, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the

comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." Well, then, may we, as a Christian people, listen with ready spirit to the invitation of our text: "*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.*"

2. *This blessing of peace implies internal union.* This is an especial element of the Church's peace. The Church will be found strong through divine grace to meet the storm of the world's opposition and persecution, if only she be saved from internal disunion and division. Nay, if the storm come, it will only then make Christ's genuine disciples more united, the Church more compact in her spiritual strength. As the tree in the bleak uplands is almost branchless, because it needs all its substance for the trunk, that it may meet the pitiless fury of the tempest, so is it with the Church of the living God. The time of trial and persecution only consolidates the power of all true discipleship, though it may lessen the Church's professed membership through faithlessness and defection.

Sad, however, is the case of the Church that suffers through the lack of internal peace. Nothing will prosper, nothing can prosper, where there is the spirit of dissension and division. While such a spirit tells of declining piety and feeble spiritual life, it at the same time unbraces the Church's energies, and weakens her every effort for the glory of the Saviour's name. Less disastrous is the hurricane of opposition and persecution from without, than the pestilence of dissension and division in the house of God. The one may fan out of the Church the formalist and the hypocrite, but it touches not the sinews of her real strength. Disunion among the members of the Church gives over the fortress into the power of the enemy. It opens the gates to the foe. It yields the citadel into his hands. The spirit of love

and purity and peace, and thus of spiritual life and progress, does not dwell with the spirit of dissension and division.

There is a peace, however, which, instead of being the evidence of Christian faith and love, is rather the indication of the lack of all spiritual life. It is quite possible for a professedly Christian Church to be distinguished by a peace which is only the waveless calm, the slumber of the dead. There is no peace so still as that beheld in the graveyard. Dead souls may have no dissension, just because they have no life. The peace of which we speak is the evidence and the consequence of spiritual life. It flows out of the union of loving hearts; a union which is established by grace through faith in Christ, cemented by Christian love and forbearance, and consolidated by the power of kindred aims and desires, of kindred objects and pursuits. It is a union which is the natural and necessary effect of that love which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things," which rejoices in the unity and peace of the whole household of faith.

This union which the blessing of peace implies is quite consistent with difference of opinion on matters that are not essential to the faith once delivered to the saints, but cannot exist where there is essential difference in respect to the grand distinctive doctrines of the gospel. How can two walk together unless they are agreed? How can the unity of the Church be preserved, or union be maintained, without intelligent and honest adherence to the Church's creed, which sets forth those doctrines of divine grace that are expressive of the sense in which she understands the Holy Scriptures? Fidelity to these doctrines, the holding them forth and the holding them fast, is vital to the Church's union and peace. Without this there

could be no peace, because there could be no real Christian union. There are some in this land, and in these days, who seek to get quit of the old landmarks alike of the Christian creed and practice; who set aside the sovereignty of divine grace in the salvation of sinners; who would empty the Saviour's cross of all the glory of substitutionary sacrifice; who would find in the sinner himself the ground of his justification in the sight of God; who, with their views of man's moral inability, see no need for the special influences of the Divine Spirit in order to a sinner's conversion and salvation. And then, how many are there, and among these some reckoned the highest in station, who have little concern for the sacredness of the day of God, who can make it a day of travel and pleasure, a day for the consideration if not for the despatch of mere secular business. Such doctrines, so inconsistent with the Word of God, and such practice, so inconsistent with its law, would peril the union and peace of any evangelical Church. The doctrines of divine grace held by this Church, and which form the basis of our ecclesiastical union, are known to all. It is by the professed acceptance of these doctrines that any one enters the Church as one of its office-bearers or members; it is by his professed adherence to these doctrines that he continues in it; and if he cease to hold these doctrines, he can as freely leave it. But no one can honestly enter a Church, or remain in its communion, who does not hold or seeks to set aside the articles of its creed, or make them only articles of peace, while they are not the matter of his belief. The internal union and peace of any Church can only be maintained by honest adherence to its distinctive doctrines. Any other course tells only of internal dissension and division. Nor could any truly Christian man who holds the doctrines of

divine grace, consent to be still and silent for the sake of peace, while any who had entered the Church by profession of adherence to the doctrines of her creed only seemed to remain in it for the purpose of subverting that faith which is the basis of her union and the matter of her testimony. While there may be forbearance among Christian men in regard to those things that are non-essential to salvation, and while in all things there must be the exercise of Christian love, there must be unity in things that are essential in those doctrines of divine grace which the word of God reveals, if the Church is to enjoy internal union and peace.

And all this is quite consistent with difference of opinion on matters that are non-essential to salvation, and with that Christian love which ought ever to be manifested towards different denominations of Christian men. In this imperfect state, even while we have an infallible record of doctrine and duty, it is not to be expected that there shall be in all things precise conformity of view or sameness of opinion. While we hold in common the grand doctrines of divine grace, I am not to love my Christian brother the less because we may happen to differ on matters that affect not the foundation of the Church's faith, the administration of her discipline, or the purity of her membership. Nor, while attached by denominational ties, and more especially by doctrinal views, to the Church to which we belong, are we to fail in Christian love to other Christian brethren, though they follow not with us. It is the glory of divine grace that it unites the hearts of Christian men, who hold the Head Christ, in bonds of loving fellowship, no matter what may be their denominational distinctions. Love to the Master makes every true disciple beloved for the Master's sake.

Love is the golden bond of all Christian union. It promotes and secures the Church's peace.

When Christ's professed disciples are severed from each other by contention and division, piety becomes stunted in its growth, religious life declines, religious exercises greatly cease to be the channel of spiritual blessing, an embargo is laid upon the Church's energies, and spiritual torpor paralyzes her activities. Hence, against such a spirit of disunion every Christian man will labour, and watch, and pray. Even if he should need to contend earnestly for those things which are most surely believed among us, he will seek to do it in the spirit of Christian love. But it will not be for any or for every cause that he will take a course which may stir up the spirit of contention and division. Well does he know that discord among Christian men is a sad calamity to the Church of Christ, and one of the sorest trials to which Christian faith can be exposed. It will be the special desire and earnest care of every follower of Christ to seek peace and ensue it. Most fully does he accord with the invitation of our text, "*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.*"

3. *This blessing of peace implies growing spiritual prosperity.* There cannot be the enjoyment of true spiritual prosperity by any Church, and yet there be lacking to it this blessing of peace. And here we do not refer to mere temporal prosperity—a prosperity which points either to the number or to the wealth of its individual or associated members, or to the amount of their contributions for the support and extension of the gospel. A Church may be increased in the aggregate of its professed membership, and, because its members happen to be wealthy, may be ample in its gifts, and yet have little about it of spiritual life. There may be much laxity in admission to its communion. Nay, there are some in these lands who

hesitate not to admit to membership those who need to be taught which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and who give no evidence of faith in Christ or of repentance unto life. The ordinances of the gospel have in some cases been dispensed to those who are not members of the Church, and who make no profession of the Saviour's name. The mere increase of any Church's professed membership is not thus of itself an evidence of growing spiritual prosperity. Nor are we to reckon the spiritual life of any Church as something in all cases to be accurately gauged by its contributions to the gospel cause. It is not the matter of our belief, because it is not accordant with the teaching of the divine word, that any genuine Christian man will fail to give as the Lord prospers him for the support and extension of the gospel. He will reckon it to be his duty to deal faithfully with the stewardship with which the Lord has honoured him. He will feel it to be a privilege to give conscientiously and cheerfully, as the Lord may *give him*, for the advancement of the glory of the Saviour's name. Yet it is not in the increase of her professed membership, nor in the wealth of her members, nor in the contributions of their substance for the advancement of the gospel, that we find the main elements of that growing spiritual prosperity which ensures the peace of the Church of Christ.

One special element of growing spiritual prosperity, whereby the peace of the Church is promoted, is an earnest and faithful ministration of the great doctrines and duties of the gospel, whereby believers in Christ are edified and sinners converted to the Lord. A godly and devoted ministry, ever seeking in all the work of gospel service the glory of God through the salvation of the souls of men, ever cleaving fast to this resolve as the abiding motto over all its activities, "For I determined

not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified," ever clearly setting forth the character and law of God, the guilt and ruin of man, salvation through the atoning blood of Christ by faith in His name, the agency of the Divine Spirit in His regenerating and sanctifying grace, the need of holiness, the full and free invitations of divine mercy, and warnings to flee from the wrath that is to come, may certainly be regarded as indispensable to the Church's growing spiritual prosperity. A godly ministry and sound gospel preaching are, through divine grace, the very life's-blood of the Church's spiritual health and power, whereby she grows in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

It is by the blessing of God on the faithful ministration and careful and prayerful regard of gospel ordinances that the Church enjoys growing spiritual prosperity and peace. As all religion that is genuine and vital depends on faith in Christ, so spiritual prosperity involves the quickening and increase of the Church's faith, her growth thereby in all the graces of the Christian character, her further conformity to the Saviour's image, a closer walk with God in newness of life. When, through the power of the Divine Spirit, the Church wakes up to a sense of neglected obligations and formally regarded or forgotten duties, when the Lord's believing people betake themselves with more of earnestness to the throne of grace, when they confess with more of freedom and enlargement their shortcomings and sins, when they pray with fire and fervour that God would lift upon them the light of His countenance, and put gladness into their hearts by the experience of His love, when they become more spiritual in their conversation, more charitable in their feelings and speech, more circumspect in their daily walk, more zealous

and devoted in the service of the Lord, more earnest in supplication and liberal in gift for the advancement of the Saviour's glory, when they do the world's work for Christ's sake, and write "holiness to the Lord" on all their wealth and worldly substance, there have you the presence of growing spiritual prosperity. Then is the Church gladdened as by the refreshing summer's rain and genial sunshine. Then there is spiritual growth, and beauty, and strength. In such growing spiritual prosperity will be found the certainty of the Church's peace.

But this growing prosperity of the Church imports the conversion of sinners to the Lord. In the Church's experience, the quickening of believers and the conversion of sinners are most generally coincident. It is not difficult to explain the reason. It is in answer to the earnest and united prayers of a quickened Church that the Spirit of the Lord, in His convincing and saving influences, descends in abundance of blessing from on high. A revived Church is, through God's grace, to herald the coming of a converted world. When, through the ministration of the truth of the gospel, godless professors and careless sinners, awakened out of the deep sleep of spiritual death, are found anxiously inquiring, "What must I do to be saved?" listening with eagerness of interest to the message of divine mercy, waiting on the ordinances of divine grace as the means of blessing, praying for the help of the Divine Spirit while essaying faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as He is freely offered to them in the gospel, and closing with Him as the only and all-sufficient Saviour of sinners, this is a manifestation of a growing spiritual prosperity ever inseparable from the true peace of the Church of Christ, and in which consists her real increase and glory. For the sake of the Church's peace, we seek in our supplication this spiritual prosperity

when thus we address the divine throne: "*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.*"

4. *This blessing of peace implies united spiritual activity.* There can be no true peace where there is spiritual inaction. The peace of Christian faith is the peace of order and energy, of unity and activity. To make the Church of Christ united, Christian men must be active; to make activity productive of result, they must be united. Where union and activity are happily blended, the issue is made known in the blessing of peace.

Working for Christ is the way to Christian union, and one of the special forms by which the unity of the Church is revealed. Believers are all one in Christ Jesus. This is the effect of the agency of the Holy Spirit on the hearts in which He dwells and rules; the result of which is an everlasting and unchangeable oneness of all such as have been renewed by His grace in their relations to God and to each other. They are all of them members of that spiritual body, of which Christ is the living and life-giving Head. The Church is thus a spiritual unity, which, with much outward diversity, yet makes manifest its oneness and union. The members of this spiritual body are distinguished by a unity of relation, of motive, of desire, of feeling and affection, of spiritual experience, all of which are the golden threads of union, and essential to united activity in the work of the Lord. Bound together by ties that are tender and indissoluble, drawn together by common aims and objects and sympathies, consecrated in soul, body, and spirit to the Saviour's cause, those who compose the Church of Christ can neither be discordant in feeling nor inactive in labour for the advancement of His glory. One in the Lord, they declare their unity by united spiritual activity in

all Christian work for His sake. This unity and united activity are essential to the Church's peace.

Gospel work contemplates the well-being of the Church of Christ by the united spiritual activity of all her office-bearers. It tells of their earnest and faithful discharge of duty, that the Lord's people may grow in all the graces of the Christian character, may be gladdened with all the consolations of the Divine Spirit, and abound in all those fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God. Let the pastor fail in his duty of careful ministration, or the elder in his duty of careful oversight; let them lack zeal and energy and diligence in the work of God, and the Church will be sure to decline in its spiritual strength. Under God, the well-being of the Church much depends on a faithful evangelical ministry and an active, godly eldership. Let only the office-bearers, each in his own sphere, be earnest to stablish believers in the faith of the gospel, to visit and cheer the downcast, to comfort the afflicted and sorrowful, to seek out and reclaim the lapsed and the erring, to shed the light of gospel promise over the hearts of the bereaved and the dying; and the Church thus, by this very activity, will be strong in the growing vigour of her spiritual life. Just as physical health gives comfort, so does such united spiritual activity ensure the Church's peace.

While work within the Church especially rests on the united spiritual activity of her office-bearers, yet is it the duty and the privilege of all her members to be helpful to each other in the divine life. Nor need we say how many earnest Christian men and devoted Christian women, by their works of faith and labours of love, have been signally blessed of God for the promotion of the Church's well-being, in self-denying, self-sacrificing service to her membership, and thus done honour to the

Christian name. How signally has such ministration tended to the Church's comfort and peace!

And then, what a field of work for the united activity of the Church, in all her office-bearers and in all her members, is set before us as we look at the spiritual instruction of the young, the evangelization of the careless and ignorant of our own land,—those especially of its larger towns and cities,—and at the prosecution of missionary enterprise to the ends of the earth. Every Christian man and woman whose pulse of spiritual life beats high with love to Christ and concern for the salvation of the souls of men, will, according to ability and opportunity, be found earnest and active, with other fellow-labourers of the Church, for the advancement of the gospel cause. Every true Christian is a missionary for Christ. He will not fold his hands in idleness, with multitudes of the ignorant and unconverted all around him. He will be ready for any scheme of practical usefulness that will lead men to Christ. Nay, in the spirit of the Saviour's commission, which embraces the whole world, he will be prepared, both by self-denial and self-sacrifice, to do and to give, that the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which first began to be spoken in Jerusalem, may be made known to all nations, for the obedience of faith, that all men may see the salvation of the Lord, that the glorified Mediator may reign over a regenerated and happy world. It is in the united activity of the Christian Church for an end so blissful and glorious that we find both her well-being and her peace. "*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.*"

II. SOME OF THE REASONS WHICH SHOULD LEAD US TO SEEK THIS BLESSING OF PEACE.

1. *This blessing of peace is to be sought for the Saviour's*

sake. The peace of the Church is inseparably connected with the honour of the Saviour's name, for it is only the manifestation of the effect of that love by which all men are led to know and distinguish His disciples. Christ is the Prince of peace. He hath made our peace by the blood of His cross. His gospel is the gospel of peace. It conveys peace to the soul of him who believes, for, being justified by faith, he has peace with God. Peace is Christ's legacy to the Church. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." It is His especial promise, "The Lord shall bless His people with peace." Peace is thus distinctive of Christ's name, of Christ's gospel, of Christ's disciples, something inseparably associated with His glory. For the honour of that worthy name by which they are called, it becomes the Lord's people to seek the peace of the Church of Christ. What need, then, for the wisdom that is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy; for where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. For Christ's sake, for the honour of the Saviour's name, it should be ours to join in the earnest invitation of our text, and say, "*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.*"

2. *This blessing of peace is to be sought for the Church's sake.* The Church will never be blessed in herself with the comforts of the Divine Spirit, distinguished by high attainments in Christian experience, nor greatly honoured of God in her work of gospel enterprise, if invaded by a spirit of dissension and division. Such a spirit, as it unfits her for doing the work assigned her, so is it at once the cause and the evidence of the lowered tone of her spiritual life. Every Christian man who has the well-being of the Church at heart will mourn if discord

should enter the house and afflict the family of the living God. Most cheerfully will he join the Psalmist in the glowing expression of his heart's feelings when he says, in the words that follow our text, "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good." *"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem."*

3. *This blessing of peace is to be sought for the world's sake.* It need scarcely be said that discord existing among professed Christians, their strifes and contentions, their disunion and division, the lack of meekness and forbearance which they frequently display, is most injurious to the progress of the gospel, and tells with prejudicial influence on the minds of worldly men. Dissension is in accordance with the world's spirit; but a spirit of peace is held forth as distinctive of the disciples of Christ. It is a contradiction to the character which He is called upon to bear when any professed follower of Christ is seen to be actuated by a spirit of strife and contention. And sad is it when such a spirit is manifested in the Church, and among Christian men who wear the livery of Christ's service, and who have love and peace emblazoned on the banner which, because of the truth, they are called upon to display. Little will be done by any Church, as an instrument in the hand of the Divine Spirit for the conversion of sinners and the advancement of the missionary cause, that is not distinguished by the love and peace of the gospel. The Church of which it could be said, in primitive times, "Behold how these Christians love one another," was a blessing to the world. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of peace shall be with you. For the sake of the world

we may well join the Psalmist, and say, "*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.*"

4. *This blessing of peace is to be sought for our own sake.* The Church is the believer's home on earth, and in the peace thereof shall he have peace. Where is the man that does not feel glad in the peace and comfort of his dwelling? He can brave toil and trial from without, if only he have love and peace when he enters his abode. As long as he sees Jerusalem a quiet habitation, the Christian man can cheerfully do the world's work and patiently bear its crosses and tribulations; but how sorely is he smitten in spirit and bereft of comfort when the home of his heart on earth becomes the scene of intestine strife and division! It weighs upon his mind. It affects the liveliness of all his religious exercise. It causes his energy to flag. It is a burden to him of painful disquietude and distress. This may not be felt by him who is merely a professor of the gospel, but it is the sorrowful experience of every true believer who knows that peace is essential to the Church's prosperity as well as to his own spiritual well-being. Most earnestly will every Christian man accord with the exhortation of our text, "*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.*"

IN CONCLUSION. Fathers and Brethren, since the blessing of peace is so much needed by the Church of Christ, and has such an important bearing on her prosperity, on the spiritual well-being of her membership, and on all their zeal and diligence in the work of the Lord, let us, in the spirit of the Psalmist, and with all the fervency of believing supplication, "*pray for the peace of Jerusalem.*" In earnest desire for the honour and glory of the Saviour's name, for the good of the Church, for the advancement of the gospel in the world, for our own

spiritual and eternal well-being, let us follow the things which make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

XX.

THE WORD OF GOD.¹

I INTEND to submit to you a few thoughts respecting the Word of God. That word has especial claims upon every student of theology and every minister of the gospel. The possession of it involves no little responsibility. It demands of him into whose hands it has come both earnest attention and patient investigation. He has, in the legitimate exercise of reason, to examine with careful thoroughness the evidence of its divine origin, that he may be certified that it is the word of God. And then, next, he is bound to learn and know from it what God the Lord has spoken. To do this is the chief function of reason whenever it has reached the conclusion that sacred Scripture is a divine revelation. While all who possess the divine word are under obligation to know it, that they may do the will of God, the student of theology and the minister of the gospel are bound to make the study of it their every-day business, that they may be thoroughly furnished for the Master's service, that they may be fully qualified by manifestation of the truth to commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. That word contains the principles of divine truth they are called upon to set forth, those

¹ Closing Address to the Students of the Theological Hall in the College Buildings, Castle Terrace, Edinburgh, April 7, 1880.

doctrines of divine grace they are commanded to preach, and those ordinances and duties they are to teach men to observe. It is to the word of God they must turn, it is from it they must learn what is to be God's message by them to their fellow-men.

What we have now said, however, takes for granted that, in view of the evidences of a supernatural revelation, we have settled the question which human reason is called on to consider, and determine that God has spoken to men, that the sacred Scriptures are the inspired word of God, and an infallible and authoritative rule of faith and life. And here I only advert to the fact, because it will be readily admitted that not only is a revelation necessary and both possible and probable, but that Christianity is such a revelation, and that the books of the Old and New Testament Scriptures are the inspired record of that supernatural revelation which God has given to men.

In dealing thus with the word of God, we have to do with an inspired record of divine truth, and it becomes us to have some definite idea of what is meant by its inspiration. The question of inspiration is one we are called on to consider in reaching the conclusion that holy Scripture is an infallible rule of faith and life.

In regard to the origin and authority of the books of Scripture there has been considerable variety of view in regard to inspiration, both as to the nature and extent of the divine agency in producing them as well as to the character of the books themselves.

First of all, the Socinian or Unitarian sect, and those who favour latitudinarian views of Christian doctrine, have held that though the writers of the sacred Scriptures were commissioned to make known God's will to men, yet they received no divine assistance or guidance in the production of them, and thus, while those who wrote

might be faithful and honest in doing the work assigned them, they were yet liable to err, and did err, and hence that holy Scripture is no infallible record of divine truth or authoritative rule of faith and practice. This is a view which sets aside the inspiration of the word of God, and gives to human reason the right to sit in judgment on the substance of divine revelation, not simply the right to examine the evidence of its divine origin or to settle what is the exact text of Scripture, but to canvass its statements, and at pleasure to accept or reject any part of God's revealed will to men.

Then, next, there are those who admit a partial inspiration, which is held to apply to those parts of Scripture which are the matter of immediate revelation, and where the writers had need of divine assistance and guidance, while in respect to other parts they were left to the exercise of their own unaided faculties and to the ordinary sources of information within their reach. There are, however, some who would extend this partial inspiration to all the matter in the divine word which respects religion and morality as well as to that of immediate revelation, while they hold that beyond this limit the writers were left without divine assistance or guidance. This view assumes that there are some things in the word of God that have no bearing on religion or morality, while it also leaves to human reason to judge on the substance of divine revelation and settle what carries along with it the authoritative impress of the divine will.

Then there are those who hold the matter or substance of the sacred Scriptures to have been the result of divine assistance and guidance, while they do not extend this assistance and guidance to the words in which the truth is conveyed. They admit that there are certain portions where both matter and words may have

been given by divine inspiration, but ordinarily the writers were left to themselves to select the words in which the God-given truth was to be communicated to men. They seem to confound the distinction that subsists between revelation and inspiration, and to imagine that, apart from divine guidance and assistance, what is matter of revelation can be accurately and infallibly expressed in words. It is very difficult to attach any definite idea to truth as known apart from the words in which it is expressed, or say how infallible truth is to be reached through any vehicle which is not, like the truth itself, infallible. Nor would it be easy to settle what are the portions of the divine word in which both matter and words have not been given by the inspiration of the Divine Spirit.

Akin to this view is that of those who seem to make the inspiration of the word of God to depend on the witness to it which is given by the Divine Spirit as He works in the hearts of regenerate men, and seals the truth of the word, whereby they have a conviction of its divine origin far stronger than aught else can produce. But this witness is something quite different from inspiration. The Spirit of God testifies to the fact that Scripture is inspired when it bears witness to its being the word of God, but that witness does not render it inspired. The witness of the Spirit is a testimony to what the word of God is. It gives the believing man the assured conviction of its inspiration, but the proof of the inspiration, or that to which the Spirit bears witness,—that Scripture is the inspired word of God,—must be sought for and found in Scripture itself. Our Confession of Faith, after it has declared that the books of the Old and New Testaments are given by the inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life, and affirmed that the

authority of holy Scripture depends not on the testimony of any man or Church, but wholly upon God the Author thereof, and still further has maintained that the internal evidences of their divine origin, contained in the Scriptures themselves, are conclusive proof of their being the word of God, closes with these words: "Yet notwithstanding our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof is from the inward work of the Spirit bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts." This witness, however, to which the Confession refers is not something which makes the Scriptures infallibly true and of divine authority, but that which produces the full persuasion and assurance of their being infallibly true and of divine authority. The witness of the Spirit is the testimony to the inspiration of Scripture, the proof of which depends not on subjective but on objective evidence. The proof of inspiration we must seek in the divine word itself, in what that word declares respecting it. For let it be remembered that when the Confession affirms that we may be fully persuaded and assured of the infallible truth and divine authority of the word of God by the witness of the Spirit, it adds, "bearing witness by and with the word." The witness which leads to persuasion and assurance is *by* and *with* the word,—*by the word* when the proofs of its being a God-given, God-inspired revelation are so set forth before the believer's mind as that he is enabled clearly to discern them, and *with the word* when the saving and sanctifying effects which the Spirit accomplishes through the word in the case of the believer most clearly attest it to be divine. While, therefore, we hold it to be a precious truth, and while our Church has always held it to be a precious truth, that the Holy Spirit bears

witness to the divine word by His inward work upon the minds of men, thereby giving undoubted conviction of its infallible truth and divine authority, we do not reckon that this is what is meant by the inspiration of the word of God.

This view of inspiration, however, seems to be taken for the purpose of getting quit of the infallibility of the written word. One who holds that the Scriptures contain the word of God, but are not the word of God itself, because the witness of the Spirit does not attach itself to the outward character of the word, but to the spiritual doctrine which is the substance of the word, writes as follows:—"Now since Scripture has no other end than to convey to us a message which, when accompanied by the inner witness of the Spirit, manifests itself as the infallible word of God, we may for practical purposes say that Scripture is the infallible word of God. Scripture is essentially what it is its business to convey. But we cannot invert the proposition, and say that the infallibility which belongs to the divine substance of the word extends to the outward form of the record, or that the self-evidencing power of the word, as a rule of faith and life, extends to experiences in Scripture which are indifferent to faith and life." This view, as you see, not only sets aside the infallibility of the written word, but only admits the infallibility of that part of the substance of the word to which the Spirit of God bears inward witness. And then the writer we have quoted says still further, "That the word consists of God's commands, threatenings, and promises addressed to our faith, and above all, of the gospel offer of Christ to us. These, and none other," says he, "are the things which faith receives as infallibly true." Thus, whatever in the written word affects not faith and duty may be treated

by us as we treat any book of merely human composition or authorship, while no part of the written word is to be reckoned infallible, but only that part of its substance which, when accompanied by the inner witness of the Spirit, manifests itself as the infallible word of God. This is not the witness of the Spirit referred to in the Confession, which leads to full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority of the whole of Scripture as the inspired record of divine truth, which testifies to the inspiration of the whole written word from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the word. This is a view which puts the witness of the Spirit in the place of divine inspiration, and declares that portion only of the substance of the divine word to which the witness of the Spirit is given to be infallibly true and of divine authority. This seems to be all it holds as set forth by the declaration that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God."

There are other views of this subject which it is not necessary to notice. Let me say, if we look to the word of God, inspiration tells of such an influence of the Holy Ghost upon the minds of the writers of the sacred books as that the whole and every part of what they wrote, both in thought and expression, is the infallible word of God and possesses absolute divine authority.

First of all, this inspiration rendered all who possessed it prophets, those who spake for God. What they said, God said by them. Hence the Psalmist David could declare, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was upon my tongue." The Lord said to Jeremiah, "Lo, I have put my words in thy mouth." Thus it was that holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and what they spake was both in thought and word God's message to men.

Then, in regard to His disciples, our Lord declared, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." In His valedictory address, He tells them that when the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide them into all truth, and makes to them this special promise: "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." The word of God thus distinctly sets forth that both prophets and apostles spake and wrote under the inspiration of the Divine Spirit.

While what we have already quoted from Scripture tells that inspiration extended both to words and matter, yet it may be necessary to note more particularly, though briefly, that the word of God affirms the doctrine of verbal inspiration. Thought, indeed, cannot be dissociated from the words by which it is expressed, the substance of matter from the language by which it is conveyed. Unless the words infallibly set forth the mind of the Divine Spirit, the substance or matter of the message will be wholly undetermined. But what saith the apostle on this subject? He emphatically states, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." Hence could he aver to the Thessalonian Church that the words which they received were in truth the word of God, which effectually worketh in them who believe. And then, in quoting from the Old Testament Scriptures, our Lord and His apostles ascribed authority to the written word. It is the written word concerning which our Lord affirms, "That the Scriptures cannot be broken." It is of

the written word He speaks when He declares that "all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Him." It is of the written word the evangelists speak when they use the characteristic phrase, "That the word might be fulfilled that is written." They appeal to the written word as of infallible truth and divine authority. They set forth the written word as verbally inspired. They explain what is meant by the words, "All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God."

There are two things in regard to this subject of inspiration that require to be remembered. The first is, That while the inspiration of the divine word extends to the language as well as to the matter of the sacred books, the writers were not the subjects of a mere mechanical inspiration. Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, but they were not unconscious instruments in the hand of the Divine Spirit. The written word is the result of the agency both of God and of man. It tells of the free exercise of men's faculties, and at the same time of the controlling agency of the Divine Spirit. While God spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, He employed the language of men, using them as His organs, each according to his own distinctive peculiarities and capabilities of speech and style, of education and endowment. Inspiration neither suspended the intelligent self-consciousness of those who spake or wrote, nor affected what was distinctive in their personal characteristics or mental powers. But in all they spake and wrote they were so under the influence of the Divine Spirit that they spake and wrote, "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." As Dr. Hodge expresses it: "As the believer seems to

himself to act, and in fact does act, out of his own nature, so the inspired penmen wrote out of the fulness of their own thoughts and feelings, and employed the language and modes of expression most natural and appropriate. Nevertheless, and none the less, they spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and their words were His words."

And then, next, it is to be remembered that it is only of the sacred books as they came from the hands of the original writers that the infallibility of the written word is asserted. It is of the true text, the original text, the autograph copies of the Scriptures, that the affirmation is made. We do not seek to maintain the verbal infallibility of any translation of the divine word, nor the perfect accuracy of any transcribed copy of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. It is admitted that there are discrepancies to be found when we take different sets of manuscripts. Yet it is important to know, though discrepancies be found to exist, that they affect not one single fact or doctrine of the Christian faith. If such discrepancies did not exist, there would be no need for the careful collation of manuscripts, that the true text may be reached, nor much need for further collation if the infallibility of the written word were not to be maintained. Much has been done of later years, by the discovery and collation of manuscripts, to the furtherance of a more accurate text, and much may yet be done to set forth the true text of the divine word. It is of that true text we speak when we assert the infallibility of the written word, and declare its absolute authority as a rule of faith and life.

The doctrine of the word of God on this subject of inspiration is very clearly stated in the testimony issued by the Secession Church,—the Church to which some of

us belonged before the union,—and concerning which the Synod declared that they adopted and sanctioned it as a defence and illustration of the principles and design of the Secession, and did earnestly recommend it to the candid and diligent perusal of all under their charge. The Synod say, “We oppose as hostile to the just claims of the Scriptures, that the sacred writers were not fully inspired, that their inspiration extends only to the matter of their writings, not to the words, that even in regard to the matter they were so left to the natural acting of their minds as to be liable to error on subjects of lesser importance, and that their reasonings from facts and doctrines are often inconclusive.” The section in the testimony on the subject of inspiration from which this quotation is made is worthy of attentive perusal, and briefly sets forth the doctrine which we hold and seek to maintain. It is of vital moment that we be fully persuaded and assured that the matter of the whole word of God, both in statements of fact and declarations of doctrine, is accredited by the direct testimony of the Holy Spirit, and that the language of Scripture in the true text expresses the matter or substance intended to be conveyed by it with infallible accuracy, so that words as well as substance tell of infallible truth and divine authority. Set aside the plenary and verbal inspiration of the sacred Scriptures, and you can have no full persuasion and assurance of what is the matter of divine revelation; for if inspiration be not plenary, then the matter of it is left to be determined by the verdict of individual opinion; and if it be not verbal, then, as the vehicle does not infallibly convey the mind of the Spirit, the matter itself must be wholly undetermined. Would it be anything like a manifestation of God’s goodness in such a way to give us a revelation of His will, or at all

consistent with the divine wisdom for God to leave men in uncertainty and doubt as to the terms of the revelation He has made. The denial of this doctrine of inspiration strikes at the foundation of the Christian faith, for it sets aside the infallibility of the record which God hath given of His Son. It lowers the word of God, which He has magnified above all His name, down to the platform of ordinary authorship. If it be not the inspired word of God, it is no longer true of it, "On every line marked with the seal of high divinity, and signature of God Almighty stamped from first to last." If the written record be not the inspired word of God, then it cannot infallibly convey God's will to men. It is ours to hold and maintain that the holy Scriptures are the infallible record of the divine will, and thus an infallible and authoritative rule of faith and life.

It becomes us only further to notice that the word of God contained in the sacred Scriptures as an inspired revelation of the divine will is complete. It needs no supplement of Church tradition, nor appendix of visionary revelations. And then it is as exact as it is complete, for it requires no correction or amendment at the hand of so-called advanced thinkers, though it is quite within the sphere of a reverent scholarship to seek to settle what is the true text of the word. While both Popery and Rationalism would charge defect on the divine word, the one through incompleteness, the other through inexactness, they only reveal that extremes usually meet in the utterance of a fallacy, that, widely as the opposing errors may differ from each other, yet when on any one point they agree, the following words of Scripture only fitly describe the case: "And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together, for before they were at enmity between themselves."

Let it then be admitted that the sacred Scripture is an inspired record of supernatural revelation, and thus an infallible rule of faith and life. It becomes us next to ask, What is our duty respecting it?

The admission that sacred Scripture is the word of God carries along with it the obligation upon us in a humble and docile spirit, and by careful investigation and patient study, to seek to understand the truth and learn the duty which it is designed to teach, that we may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God; and next that we may clearly expound and faithfully declare its lessons to others. This would appear to be the special function of reason when once it can say that sacred Scripture is a divine revelation. We recognise the right of reason within its own legitimate sphere to examine the evidences of the divine origin and authority of holy Scripture, and with the aid of reverent scholarship to ascertain and settle what is the true text of the record; but let this be done, and the conclusion once reached, that Scripture is the inspired truth of God, and from that moment reason is to set itself down at the feet of divine revelation and to hear its word. By the exercise of reason, and in dependence on divine grace to aid us, we are patiently to seek to know what the word of God declares, and meekly by faith to receive whatever it reveals, though it sets forth mysteries which human reason can never fathom, and truths which are most humbling to the human heart. Though we admit the human intellect to sit in judgment on the historical proof and other evidences of the divine origin of holy Scripture, and to settle what is the original letter and true text of the written word, we deny all right to that intellect to sit in judgment on the revelation itself. It has neither the right nor the authority to add or take

away one jot or tittle from the words of the book of divine prophecy. Its whole work is simply to seek to know the truth as God has revealed it, that men by faith may receive it. The word of God and the truths of the gospel which it sets forth did not owe their existence to any discovery of the human intellect. The divine word is a revelation from God Himself. It thus claims an authority before which human reason is constrained to bow, while its message is to be received with the lowliest reverence. It were the embodiment of all that is irrational as well as irreverent for human reason to claim the right to sit in judgment on what is held to be an acknowledged message from God.

Such being the function of reason, when once the conclusion has been reached that Scripture is the inspired word of God, it becomes the duty of every man into whose hands it has come to make it the matter of his careful and prayerful study. He is to learn for himself from the pure source of Scripture undefiled what it reveals, that his faith may stand not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. To seek to know the truth at the fountainhead is the birthright, and thus the duty, of every disciple of Christ. Whoever may minister to him the word of truth, he is to search the Scriptures daily whether these things are so, and bear all that may be said to the law and to the testimony, for if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them. While such is the duty of all, it is specially the duty of every student of theology and every minister of Christ to give himself continually to the study of the word, for it is his province and work to be an interpreter of the sacred oracles. The priest's lips should keep knowledge. The Christian people are not called on ordinarily to be teachers of the

word. While many of them may be greatly helpful in evangelistic work among the lapsed and careless, yet their obligations are fully met by their being careful readers of the word, and by their freely exercising their right to judge by it of all the teaching of the pulpit, taking heed both how and what they hear. And ever will it be the endeavour of every true-hearted Christian teacher to foster the inquiring spirit, that his people may be established in the faith. I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say.

As it is the province of the student of theology and the minister of the gospel to be interpreters of the sacred oracles, the Bible is thus to be their text-book, and the grand object in all their study of it is that they may know what is the mind of the Holy Ghost as there expressed, and what is His message from it to their fellow-men. In a prayerful, humble, docile spirit, must every student approach the sacred oracles, ever remembering that he has himself to learn from it what he is called upon to teach, that his teaching is to be God's message from it to the people, and not his own, that he is to study it and set forth its message with these words ever ringing in his ear: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman to the house of Israel; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me." The teaching of the pulpit is to be the exposition and illustration of divine truth as expressed in the divine word, and the enforcement of its message. It is by loyalty to the truth of divinely inspired Scripture, which is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, by faithfulness in proclaiming and enforcing the message which that truth reveals, by not shunning to declare all the counsel of God, by speaking to the people all the words of this

life, keeping back nothing that is profitable unto them, that a Christian teacher shows himself to be approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. It is just as any man is loyal to the word of God in the exposition and illustration of its truth and the enforcement of its message, that he is truly a minister of Jesus Christ.

Hence we hold that all sound dogmatics must be based on enlightened and thorough exegesis. It is the part of exegesis, by honest and upright interpretation, to set forth from each particular passage of the divine word those aspects of truth which the Holy Spirit intended it to convey, as it is the part of dogmatics to gather up from such interpretation all that Scripture teaches, and put into systematized form the doctrines it reveals and the duties it enjoins. And thus, however high may be the scholarship we bear to the study of the word of God, however vast be the amount of general knowledge we have gathered from all the fields of human learning and experience, all our scholarship and knowledge are only to be handmaids to our study of that word, all only to be made helpful in enabling us to illustrate its doctrines and enforce its message. It is especially dangerous for the student of Scripture when scholarship and learning are unsanctified by divine grace, and only tend to foster pride of intellect, which is ever ready to turn away the mind from the careful study and loyal exposition of the word of God to vain speculations. Fanciful speculations have no place in the message which God has given the Christian teacher to proclaim. They are of no use in view of the grand end which all Christian ministration contemplates. Nor is God honoured, nor the cause of Christ advanced, nor the souls of sinners saved by teaching for doctrines either the commandments or the

speculations of men. "He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"

There are some who seem to claim the right of reason, if not to sit in judgment on what is an acknowledged message from God, at least to erect a kind of metaphysical standard of truth to which the doctrines of the word of God are to be adjusted, that its teaching may suit the phases of modern thought and be more pleasing to men of taste and culture. In this way many have got quit of the grand distinctive doctrines of the gospel, and have no place in their teaching for Christ's substitutionary death and atoning sacrifice. But if, subordinate to the glory of God, the salvation of the souls of men be the end contemplated by all gospel teaching, then he will be best fitted as an instrument in the hands of the Divine Spirit to effect it who most faithfully and zealously and prayerfully sets forth Christ as He is revealed by the gospel testimony in the word, and through those doctrines of divine grace which present Him in all the glory of His person as God-Man Mediator, in all the fulness of His offices as the prophet, priest, and king of His people, in all the perfection of His vicarious, atoning sacrifice for the acceptance of faith by every sinner's soul. It is not he who is most in sympathy with the speculations of so-called modern thought, but he who is most in sympathy with the truth and message of the word of God, who studies that word with prayer and patience, that he may fitly and fully proclaim its message, who will be blessed of God as an instrument in His hands for the edification of believers and the conversion of sinners. It is not the work of

the Christian teacher to adapt the doctrines of the sacred Scriptures to modern thought, but by the weapons of his warfare, which are not carnal but spiritual, and mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, to cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. It is his work by divine grace to subdue all thought to the faith of Christ by the message of the gospel, which, as God's testimony concerning His Son, is to be given in all its fulness and clearness, and ever with the remembrance that it is God's message, not his own, which he is commissioned to proclaim. "Arise, go unto that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee."

It will be found that he will most faithfully and closely give himself to the study of the word of God, and loyally and earnestly seek to expound and illustrate its truths and enforce its message, who himself has experienced the gospel of Christ to be the power of God to his own personal salvation by faith in Christ Jesus. Whenever any one has learned through the teaching of the Divine Spirit that the Holy Scriptures are able to make men wise unto salvation, he has thereby obtained such evidence of the suitableness and sufficiency of gospel truth to effect the great ends for which it has been revealed, as binds him to the study of the word of God, and leads him to make this utterance of the apostle the motto of his ministerial life, for which all the work of the Theological Hall is a preparation: "For I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." And be it remembered, it is a sanctified intellect wielding the spiritual weapons of heaven's gospel armoury that is God's chosen instrument-

ality ordained through grace to subjugate human hearts, to conquer amidst all the fierce and absorbing conflict of human passions, to write heaven's spiritual history in a world of sin. While the word of God contains the truths which the Christian teacher is to proclaim and the message he is to bear to his fellow-men, while the power of the Divine Spirit can alone make his message reach the consciences and hearts of men, it is at the same time only the experience of divine grace that can qualify any one, however gifted he may be, to identify himself with the gospel cause, to have conscious sympathy with the grand ends it seeks to secure, or rightly to use the instrumentality of the divine word for the ingathering of sinners and the upbuilding of the Church of the living God. "We believe, and therefore speak,"—this, through divine grace, gave might and mastery to apostolic preaching. Faith in the gospel testimony, and trust in Him whom it reveals, are still essential to all right study of the word of God, to the appreciation of its soul-saving truths, to the effective proclamation of its message to men. The husbandman that laboureth must first be partaker of the fruits. Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

And then, what need of prayer to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, that He may give unto every student of the sacred oracles the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ! He alone can guide into all truth, and give that spiritual insight whereby we know the things that are freely given us of God. The Author of sacred Scripture is its best commentator. While human teachers may be valuable to aid in the exposition and illustration of the Word of God, the help of the Holy Spirit is essential to preserve and foster that habit of soul and those moral

dispositions which are so necessary to the right study of the sacred Scriptures, as well as to apprehend and unfold the truths which they reveal. "For a man," says Dr. Owen, "solemnly to undertake the interpretation of any portion of Scripture without invocation of God to be taught and assisted by His Spirit is a high provocation of Him, nor shall I expect the discovery of truth from any one who thus proudly engages in a work so much above his ability."

It is my earnest desire and prayer that you, who are students of sacred Scripture, may grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, that by the power of the Holy Spirit the word of Christ may dwell in you richly in all wisdom, that, enjoying all the benefits of our Theological College, so admirably equipped for your teaching and training, you may be made by God able ministers of the New Testament, that you may be long spared to labour, and greatly blessed in the work of the gospel; that by your faithful, earnest, and scriptural preaching of Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, sinners may be converted, saints edified, the Saviour honoured, and God glorified, and you yourselves, through His grace, found in peace of the Lord at His coming.

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